

ROMANCE AND REALISM:
NEW ZEALAND SHORT FICTION 1865-1965

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines changes in the relationship between romance and realism in the New Zealand short story over a period of one hundred years, from approximately 1865 to 1965. I argue that the short story is inherently a romantic genre and that both realism and romance are constant elements. My purpose is to show an evolving pattern between the two modes of writing during the rise of realism which began in the nineteenth century and peaked in the postwar period. Because there is a fluctuating relationship between the two modes in New Zealand short fiction, it is possible, through the psychoanalytical approach to the stories which I employ, to establish the prevailing emotional climate of each era.

Beginning with the colonial period, I show how the magazine influenced fiction writing by initiating some important changes to the European New Zealand short story. I discuss the attempt by male writers of the 1930s to dominate the literary scene by using realism as a weapon. Then, with Katherine Mansfield and Frank Sargeson as the models for postwar writers, I illuminate through my analysis of the texts, a new coalition of romantic realism.

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INTRODUCTION

The Project and the Theoretical Approach

My initial impulse in introducing this thesis is to lead the reader into the topic through the labyrinth of literature via the thought-provoking passages and inductions that I spiralled through in its conception, indicating early reactions, directions and illuminations, as a means of transmitting my affinity for the subject.

From earliest childhood I have had an addictive craving for stories - always the desire to be transported to **another place**, to identify with this heroine or that, to **be** that paragon who was beautiful and brave and loved, who had negotiated a quest and triumphed, who had by patience or virtue or other human faculty overcome tribulation, won the handsome prince and, clasped in his arms, ridden off to the castle. The act of reading or listening to these stories had a wonderfully liberating effect on the imagination, I noticed, yet involved a guilty sense of self-indulgence, and until enlightened by recent research, I had an uneasy feeling that such an 'eccentricity' could be diagnosed as morbid escapism. But reflecting now on the

topic, I believe I am not so singular and that these stories fulfil not only a personal but a fundamental human need. At all events, I knew it was this essential 'romantic' aspect in fiction that I most wanted to pursue.

The romantic impulse for stories is closely associated with the issue of the archetype. Within most people are innate desires or yearnings for a Utopian state of being. These appear as archetypal motifs which, according to Carl Jung, are primordial mental images or 'psychic residues' and recurring elemental patterns inherited in the collective unconscious of all humanity, and expressed in myth, dream, religion and private fantasy, as well as in works of literature (Abrams, 11). Fundamentally, these expressions are all forms of desire. Perhaps it is the concept of romantic love, perfect union with an Other, spiritual union, sexual rapture or domestic bliss. Whatever form it takes, this desire is embraced in the urge to enter or create a story-world of fulfilment, (that is, 'a romance'). Its universality is manifested in the perennial creation of mythologies and dreams of people of diverse societies and cultures.

Myth is probably the most nearly original form of the romance. The primary tendency for a race of people when they settle somewhere is to establish very early a basic mythology for themselves. Both primitive and advanced

peoples create myths to explain cosmic phenomena and to overcome their feelings of awe at the forces of nature, but also as a means of empowerment in coming to terms with their environment and the specifics of the local experience. By extension, myth is, according to W. H. New in Dreams of Speech and Violence, 'any commonly held cultural belief which encodes (not necessarily accurately) the culture's self-image' (New, 250)

'Myth is literature', states Richard Chase in his informative chapter in Myth and Method. 'The word "myth" means story...and must be considered as an aesthetic creation of the human imagination' (Miller, 129). Chase discusses Professor Boas' contributions to the study of myth in his definitive essay, 'Folktales of the North American Indians'. Rather cryptically, Chase implies that we shall discover the function of myth if we consider the four questions Boas puts:

Why does the mythmaker as he relates his tale to his audience imagine a time when the world was different? What use does he make of this idea? What needs call it into existence? What emotions does the evocation of the past arouse (Miller, 131-2)?

It seems to me they relate to some Utopian era or ideal

existence of our farthest ancestors which we seem to sense innately and which we long to recapture.

There appears to be a distinct correlation between the function of myth and the function of romance. Like myth-making, the romance seems to incorporate a similar act of sublimation. Psychologically, it operates in diverting the energy of primitive or primordial impulses into a culturally higher activity.

Similarly, dreams are imagistic 'stories' emanating from the unconscious and also expressing this idealistic wish-fulfilment or the loss of it. (Freud maintains that 'since nothing but a wish can set our mental apparatus at work', broadly speaking, all dreams are wish fulfilments) (Freud, 721). Freud and Lacan both base their theories on this instinctual human desire.

Thus, as the principle at work in all of these narrative creations - romance, mythology, story, dream - is the imagination, it seemed to me that its expression is clearly our source of psychological satisfaction and liberation.

In pursuit of some sort of verification and cohesion for these ideas, a course of research in the areas of the romance, myth and the short story produced some

illuminating results. In particular, I was struck by the comments of Gillian Beer in her book, The Romance, and Clare Hanson in Re-reading the Short Story which suddenly crystallised notions I had been grappling with in shaping the thesis for this project.

In her study, Beer traces the romance from earliest writing to the present day. She comments on the 'mutations' of the romance over the centuries and notes the special strength of the mode in that 'it offers a peculiarly precise register of the ideals and terrors of the age, particularly those which could find no other form. The romance', she states, 'is mimetic at a mythic level. It forms itself about the collective subconscious of an age' (Beer, 58). She also notes that 'romance has become a literary quality rather than a form and it is frequently set against 'reality' in literary argument (Beer, 66).

The second notion which animated me was Clare Hanson's interpretation of Post-structuralist theory in relation to 'the story'. These theorists, she observes, argue that 'any literary work may be characterised as a structure of representation and selection founded on the primary impulse to dream/desire (and) the greater the orientation towards desire, the further, they argue, language is removed from its functional and restricted meaning'. Further, Hanson suggests that 'the short story is a more "literary" form

than the novel in this sense - in its orientation towards the power words hold, or release and create, over and above their mimetic or explicatory function'. Hanson believes that

'words, as Lacan has argued, may be chosen in any given work of literature for reasons which have as much to do with the movement of unconscious desire as with the production of literal meaning. Lacan argues that desire is continually playing over language, deeply informing its structure (Hanson, 24). I would suggest (she says) that the short story writer in particular **courts** such a play of language: this is a part of what she or he is seeking in the "unknown", with its "anguish" and "rapture"' (Hanson, 24).

Together these comments confirmed a strong impression that elements of the romance are inherent in the story itself, and what particularly stirred my interest was the **continuity** of romance through literature, how **fundamental** was its use, and its association with dream, desire and myth-making through the expression of human ideals. And if these observations are sound, then desire, wish-fulfilment and/or Utopian quest are the instinctive motivation behind the composition and interpretation of the romance in

particular and the story in general.

'In the short story' (and I am quoting Clare Hanson again) 'we accept a degree of mystery, elision, uncertainty ...as we would not in the novel. Elision in the short story relates to the movement of desire on the part of the reader....These elisions and gaps within a text offer a special place for the workings of the reader's imagination' (Hanson, 25). Thus the imagination is free to fill the gaps and the invitation is there for the reader's desire to enter the text.

I have been establishing the links between the romance and story, myth, dream and desire. The romantic content in a story, I am suggesting, derives from the imagination and seeks to reveal archetypal images and the unconscious or repressed desire inherent in us. But since every story is created by humans who draw their copy from their experience of reality, and from the various forms of literature derived from the romance tradition, each story will inevitably strike a point somewhere along the scale of binary opposition between romance and realism. Similarly, 'story' carries the contrary forces of truth-telling and lying (New, 253): truth-telling in the attempt to represent fallen humanity and the world as it is, possibly stimulated by the expectations of 'story' being the derivational root of 'history' and so based on facts: and lying, that is

romancing, which is the narration of a fantasy or a fiction. In her discussion, Gillian Beer states that 'all fiction contains two primary impulses; the impulse to imitate daily life and the impulse to transcend it' (Beer 10). Her observation demonstrates for me the distinctions between realism and romance, not as antagonistic forces as they are often so jarringly juxtaposed in literary criticism, but as two parts of the one personality, interior and exterior, revealing the possibility of the combination, in men and women, as well as in literature, being effective and complementary.

It is for this reason that I embarked upon the present project, to examine the relationship between romance and realism in our own literature, for New Zealand is generally thought to produce a realistic fiction. In the 1930's, it was alleged that Frank Sargeson had 'authorised' a New Zealand realist tradition. And in his book, Barbed Wire and Mirrors, Lawrence Jones stresses the 'persistence of realism' in the country's short fiction (Jones, 16). The rationale behind Jones's claim seems to be based on a personal viewpoint, namely; 'That realism should persist here while it is in retreat elsewhere is probably the result of a congruence between realism and certain basic aspects of the New Zealand national character and experience, for realism involves a way of looking at life that seems congenial to New Zealand'

(Jones, 16). Needless to say, I am not convinced of this when it comes to fiction writing, nor that realism is as Jones goes on to say, 'the most striking feature of the contemporary New Zealand short story' (Jones, 16). In contrast, what I see as striking about the modes of New Zealand writing is the persistence of the **romantic** elements within a fiction that purports to be realistic.

I suspect too, that history and location have a distinct bearing on the ratio of the romantic to realistic content in the works of New Zealand story-tellers. Lady Barker's anecdotal sketches of the 1870's, for instance, are written expressly for a British market. Her 'journal-entry' presentation illustrates almost total absence of romantic elision, demonstrating possibly the extremest form of realism in New Zealand short story writing. Sketches such as 'Christmas Day in New Zealand' from A Christmas Cake in Four Quarters and the 'letters' in Station Life in New Zealand record simply and accurately her personal experiences of the colonial lifestyle on a large North Canterbury sheep station. Her writing, that is, makes little attempt in its design to exploit the language metaphorically for romantic effect, but rather to educate and entertain through factual, first-hand reportage. The resulting personal documentaries and the realism of setting reflect that urgency felt by the new colonists to chronicle for those 'back Home' and for

posterity, the quaint existence so far removed from that 'highly-wrought civilization' (Barker, Preface) they had left.

Nevertheless, no matter how true to life, all writing is selective, so that autobiography itself becomes an artistic creation, inevitably a fiction. There is thus a creative factor at work even in attempted realistic writing so that all stories are by nature romantic. The whole notion of relating as extracts from her journal, these stories of her wild and wonderful antipodean adventure is a romantic concept. Moreover, the narrator's voice, especially in Station Life in New Zealand, animates in our imagination the woman behind the 'correspondence'. Her perception of the scenes betrays a vital, sensitive personality. And, realistic though they are, Lady Barker's pen portraits unconsciously reflect the emotional climate of the era. Evidence of what I consider to be the romantic element underlying her 'documentary' accounts is unconsciously expressed, for example, in one account of an expedition into the upper reaches of the Waimakiriri River:

Ever since we left the clearing from which the start was made, we had turned our backs on the river, but about three o'clock in the afternoon we came suddenly on it again, and stood on the most

beautiful spot I ever saw in my life...on our left was the most perfect composition for a picture: in the foreground a great reach of smooth water, except just under the bank we stood on, where the current was strong and rapid; a little sparkling beach, and a vast forest rising up from its narrow border, extending over chain after chain of hills, till they rose to the glacial region, and then the splendid peaks of the snowy range broke the deep blue sky line with their grand outlines.

All this beauty would have been almost too oppressive, it was on such a large scale and the solitude was so intense, if it had not been for the pretty little touch of life and movement afforded by the hut belonging to the station we were bound for (Barker, 186-7).

Certainly, we have been given a realistic likeness of the actual geography of the place, but beneath the external representation is an unexpressed agoraphobic reaction to the 'large scale' grandeur and the intensity of the 'solitude' which is evident in the observer's obvious relief at being able to focus on the comforting **domestic** part of the 'composition', 'the pretty little touch of life and movement afforded by the hut belonging to the station we were bound for'. It is the unconscious response of the urbane British immigrant and an

instinctive method of coping with feelings of awe and foreignness in a starkly dominating or, as Lady Barker perceives it, 'oppressive' environment. This is a peculiar characteristic of much colonial literature.

The idea, briefly outlined above, of relating realism and romance in the New Zealand short story to the historical chronology of the nation provides a thematic 'clue of thread' to follow through the discourse, without which, like the legendary Theseus, this thesis could meander pointlessly.

Defining the terms: Romanticism

Because of the mutations of the romance, and for that matter of realism, I will define my conception of the terms, expanding and highlighting features which I think should enliven discussion of the texts and lead in the direction of my interest.

I use the terms 'romanticism', 'romantic' and 'romance' interchangeably, but to clarify a rather complex area, it is important to understand that the term

'romance' in the early Middle Ages meant the new vernacular languages derived from Latin, as distinct from formal Latin, the learned language of writers to that time. As Gillian Beer points out, 'enromancier, romanciar, romanz meant to translate or compose books in the vernacular' (Beer, 4). The word became associated with the content of these diverse works - usually non-didactic narratives of ideal love and chivalric adventures such as Sir Garwain and the Green Knight and Le Chevalier de la Charete. The medieval romance established a pattern that was to be the dominant form for fiction for possibly the next 500 years. But the romance has antecedents long before the twelfth century and a vitality which has lasted long since the Middle Ages (Beer, 4). The typical medieval 'courtly' romance is set in an idealised world peopled with kings and queens. The significance of the characters' social status is commented on by Gillian Beer:

In the romance, as in dreams (she states), queens and kings are our representatives. Their royalty universalises them. They revive our sense or our own omnipotence, which though constantly assailed by adult experience, survives in the recesses of personality even after childhood (Beer, 2-3).

Beer distinguishes

'two major types of the romance, which for convenience we may call aristocratic and popular (which) have come down to us, sometimes converging, sometimes standing in opposition. They call on the same themes and properties but differ in scale. The aristocratic romance, such as that of Malory or Ariosto, makes clear its descent from the epic; it is a large-scale work interweaving many narrative threads. The popular romance tends towards simplicity and concentration as in the ballad.

There are two major turning-points in the history of the romance in England; they both have to do with an increasing self-consciousness about the way the form is used. The first was the publication of Shelton's translation of Don Quixote in 1612 and 1620...The second was the 'romantic revival', bringing with it the conscious antiquarianism with which writers of the Romantic period viewed the romance (Beer, 6-7).

In both cases the effect was to prescribe the province of the romance as the remote, thereby demonstrating its remove from reality, and to introduce a moral consciousness. But, as Beer indicates,

whereas the immediately Post-Cervantic attitude to romance tended to establish the exclusiveness of the romance world...writers of the Romantic period, such as Schlegel and Coleridge, recognized that the romance expressed a world permanently within all men: the world of the imagination and of dream (Beer, 7).

Joseph Shipley in his work entitled The Literary Isms, draws similar conclusions; however, he distinguishes romanticism through a comparative outline of literary movements. Remarking on the opposition between neo-classicism and romanticism, he notes 'the one emphasizes the outer form and the other the spirit within - intellect versus emotion' (Shipley, 8). 'Classicism', he says 'maintains an ideal of objectivity and is social, whereas romance is unmistakably subjective and individual' (Shipley, 8). 'The two literary attitudes more frequently opposed are realism and romanticism, felt as tendencies in the author's work which, in their fullness, are the extremes of which classicism is the mean' (Shipley, 10). In defining the terms, Shipley mentions that 'Cabell's novels as well as his essays point the theory that romance is the "demiurgic" force that leads man toward the ideal' (Shipley, 15). Shipley quotes Oscar Wilde on the subject as saying that '...it is this will that stirs in us to have the creatures of earth, and the affairs of earth, not

as they are but "as they ought to be", which we call romance' (Shipley, 15). The most common distinction, however, has the romanticist showing men and women as they would like to be, and that "as they ought to be" is the revelation of the more sober classicist; while the realist portrays men as they are; and the naturalist, through partial portraiture or misapplied emphasis, as worse than they are' (Shipley, 15).

From his broad historical outlook, Shipley's view of romanticism narrows to focus on the notion of art as escape, and the arresting point of interest cited yet again is the correlation, made by the disciples of Freud, between romantic books and dream "wish-fulfilments" for both writer and reader which includes their willing identification with the hero (Shipley, 16).

Shipley observes that there are several sorts of escape possible to the reader, that is, various things from which s/he may wish to flee. He mentions the desire to escape from his/her immediate environment, from its banal monotony into a wonder-world; or from its despair 'to the calm of art' (Shipley, 17). Or the author/reader may desire escape from his/her emotions. In the manner that the burlesque show or tragedy purges its audience of pent up emotion and in the way the mystery play releases fear, the romance offers escape from our drab existence,

from our daily anxieties or merely from boredom. ~But', Shipley states, 'it has not been stressed that what (the reader) seeks is not a dream world, but **"real life"**, life as by the standards of his desire it should be' (Shipley, 18). (My emphasis)

The pedigree of the English romance has now been traced in a direct line of descent from the Arthurian quest to the present day. According to researchers, the enduring characteristics of the mode are the imaginative quest for an ideal and the dream-like essence which demands fulfilment in life. It can therefore be perceived that the central distinctive feature of the romantic mode is the fictional expression of a latent desire in men and women who are clearly unsatisfied with what reality offers. It is a quest for reconciliation between the inner vision and the outer experience.

Motivated by these notions, I shall be exploring the literature in the analyses which follow to see if these theories apply to New Zealand short fiction and to decide whether the special meanings of the stories relate to historic reality. What I would suggest is that if a story lacks the essential imaginative quality, if it manages to maintain the strict standards of realism, it becomes in fact a 'non-fiction' and the creative nature of 'story' is lost.

I began with a premise that the romance has its source in an idealistic vision or Utopia; then I proceeded to support the claim with key knowledge and quotations from the investigations of prominent researchers of the romance. We have followed its evolution through history and can observe its appearance in modern times, its courtly veneer sloughed off, clinging tenuously to its morality, but still firmly entrenched in the essential imaginative and psychological elements that gave it life. As there were many ways to proceed at this juncture, it became necessary to make a decision as to which way I should orient myself and my topic theoretically. Because of the specifically subjective nature of the thesis and the links between the romance and the psyche, however, it was clear that the most natural course to follow was the one that led into Lacan's field, into the theory, that is, of unconscious desire in language. But this is not to exclude the orthodox methods of literary analysis: it is to see another dimension in the stories.

The path follows the psychology of literary appreciation and response. In my critical interpretations of structure, characterisation, metaphor, allegory and imagery and other relevant rhetoric therefore, I shall not be averse to using a psychoanalytic approach or theory especially where it may shed a revelatory beam of light on

the literature. I shall, however, be particularly wary of succumbing to the intentional fallacy and shall tactfully avoid autobiographical insinuation. It is of course, quite another matter should the intention of the author be unconscious, in which case we are dealing with unintentionalism. For often, in a similar manner to dream, meaning remains a mystery to the dreamer, its 'author', until analysis throws light upon the substitutive relationship between the overt and latent terms. Lacan's study, firmly rooted in linguistics, provides access to the formations of the unconscious through this type of analysis of language.

Jane Gallop, on the subject, discusses Anthony Wilden's essay on Lacan (Gallop, 29). (It must be noted that a fundamental method of psychoanalysis is interpretation through transference.) 'Transference', she says, 'endows the analyst with the magical power to interpret' (Gallop, 29). In the application of psychoanalysis to literature, the literary critic is endowed with the same illusory power as the analyst. In the critic's attempt to interpret the meaning of a work using this approach, s/he becomes a "symbol hunter"; that is, the critic knows what the author does not know because s/he has cracked the writer's unconscious code. Wilden, for some reason, sees in such power an act of superiority because of its association with transference and because

it confers a privilege on the critic's knowledge. But as Jane Gallop rationalises:

As long as interpretation is not accompanied by analysis of transference in reading, the authority of psychoanalysis over literature goes unquestioned. Interpretation is always the exercise of power, while transference is the structuring of that authority. To analyse transference is to unmask that structuring, interrupt its efficient operation (Gallop, 27).

This is understood, and for the purposes of this thesis, psychoanalytic theory provides another useful approach to the literature I shall be examining. Thus, in analysing the texts per se, where I discover archetypal patterns or buried desire in metaphor or symbol for example, I shall not hesitate to highlight their significance in discussion.

Reading Jacques Lacan's Écrits is notoriously difficult. One critic complains that 'the preposterous difficulty of Lacan's style could be said to mirror his theory' (Gallop, 38). His writings are a rebus because he not only explicates the unconscious but strives to imitate it (Gallop, 37). Nevertheless a general understanding of Lacan's exposition of the role of desire in the

unconscious is important if this is to be a theoretical principle of my own inquiry.

The major contribution of Lacan's work to the humanities is a recourse to the science of language which allows for formulated knowledge of the unconscious to be articulated. Lacan's study is, in fact, a Freudian renaissance in which the practice of Freud's principles provided him with the momentum inductively to establish his own famous theories.

Anika Lemaire in her work on Lacan's Ecrits explains:

All formations of the unconscious reveal the same formal structure to analysis. The true speech erupts into the subject's discourse and its attempts to outwit the censor bring about a rupture between the signifier and the signified: the unconscious. Through the play of condensation and displacement, the repressed word is transposed (this is the first meaning given by Freud to transference: Enstellung or transposition, distortion), and emerges into consciousness wearing a mask. This is why the formations of the unconscious always signify something different from what they are actually saying. The two main mechanisms defined by Freud as effecting this

transposition are displacement and condensation (Lemaire, 191).

Lacan perceives these two processes of displacement and condensation as the stylistic figures of metonymy and metaphor. He provides access to 'the fundamental opposition between the signifier and the signified in which (he says), as I show them, the powers of language begin' (Lacan, 258). He draws our attention to the 'automatism' of the laws which are articulated in the signifying chain. The subject does not understand the chain of connection in the words 'articulated' in his/her symptoms, dreams, jokes or parapraxes (nor possibly in the 'fiction' he or she produces) until the analyst, working through the effects determined by the double play of combination (metonymy) and substitution (metaphor) in the signifier, reveals the buried desire.

Metaphor, according to Lacan, is 'an effect of positive meaning, that is, a certain passage from the subject to the meaning of the desire' (Lacan, 258). 'Metonymy is...the effect made possible by the fact that there is no signification that does not refer to another signification and in which their common denominator is produced...the little meaning...that proves to lie at the basis of the desire....(F)or it is as a derivation of the signifying chain that the channel of desire flows, and the

subject must have the advantage of a cross-over to catch his own feed-back' (Lacan, 259). It is in this sense that Lacan sees the unconscious as structured in the most radical way like a language (Lacan, 234).

Elizabeth Wright presents a lucid assessment of this unconscious desire expressed in language in her chapter in Modern Literary Theory:

There is an endless chain of signifiers in pursuit of a 'real' satisfaction, what Lacan calls 'lack'. As regards metaphor, desire is revealed by the metaphorical substitution for surface meaning of the repressed meaning. All the time what the subject wants continues to show itself. The metaphor can be regarded as the symptom which reveals the repressed desire, providing access to the unconscious across the boundary between signifier and signified.... For Lacan, hyperbolically speaking, every word is a Freudian slip, whether recognized or not, the point being, that the unconscious is present even when not recognized (Jefferson, 154).

Denotative language which means (or intends to mean) what it says, that is, using words in their 'standard' sense, is the literal language of realism. Metonymy and

metaphor, in fact all figurative language, deliberately (and as is evident in psychoanalysis, often unwittingly) interfere with the system of literal usage. Terms literally connected with one object can be transferred to another object. The transferences involved can lead to the discovery, through the workings of the imagination, of a new, more profound, 'special' or more precise meaning in the discourse. Thus on a linguistic level, and especially metaphorically, we see again that an operation of **transference** is the mechanism which has the power to release meaning behind and beyond the banal. Figurative language, I believe, is intrinsically associated with the romance, with the freed imagination and with desire, whereas an attempt to portray the 'real world' accurately involves a conscious and concentrated restraint on the imaginative faculty. My point is that, as happens in myth and dream and in the romance, the imagination seems subtly to convert humanity's repressed desires into a still cryptic though more accessible form which a psychoanalytic investigation can sometimes uncover.

A metaphor in Yeats' poem, 'Sailing to Byzantium', will serve to exemplify my meaning:

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick...

The appeal of the transference here may include the visual sense, in which case an image of a scarecrow may present itself, with possible after-images of lifelessness, abandonment, decrepitude and a sense of being cast-off, but the essential mode of metaphor is linguistic and as a result the appeal reaches much further. In a psychoanalytical approach, semantic associations can be crucial to an interpretation. Without immediately considering why, we are instinctively aware that the second line of the quotation evokes the anguish suffered by the aged through absences and losses - the loss of dignity, loss of faculties and physical attributes and lack of respect all spring to mind. However, if we put the language to scrutiny, we discover the reason. The metaphor, 'a tattered coat upon a stick', has effectively removed the **subject** from the sentence. By eliminating the human element in this way, Yeats underlines the mortality of mankind.

Reviewing the lines in context reinforces this meaning, for the poem celebrates the enduring beauty and the 'unaging intellect' of Art and compares it with the decay and death of mankind. An anxiety content sensed in the lines quoted is also confirmed in context. The (presumably) aging poet/narrator in his despair, resolves that 'once out of nature', he will never take the bodily form of 'natural things' again but will choose to become

an art form, an artifice 'such...as Grecian goldsmiths make.../Of what is past, or passing, or to come' (Allison, 444).

In its effect then, the metaphor or substitution bewails a lack, in this instance a lack of existence, so we have gained access to the disguised meaning in the language, the desire of the poet, precipitated by impending death, to be immortal or immortalised.

Further, as metaphors only exist when they occur in language, in society and in time, they are inevitably shaped by social as well as linguistic pressures. Insidiously therefore, they also illuminate society's values - 'a tattered coat upon a stick' can be seen to expose Western society's attitude of contempt toward the aged.

My main purpose, however, has been to account psychoanalytically for the impact of metaphor and its links with romanticism in literary criticism. This type of analysis, as I intend to show, when applied to contemporary New Zealand short fiction, is a significant one in sustaining evidence of the romantic elements inherent in this country's story writing.

Realism

If the romance serves in this way as the vehicle for such subliminal and subjective ideals and desires, by contrast the duty of realist writers is to give a literal representation of the world, to be true to 'life', to produce an accurate and unromanticized description of contemporary society. Far from being 'escapist' and 'unreal', the realist 'attempts to divert attention from the fictionality of the work by avoiding all eloquent and figurative language (Fowler, 157). And in its most effective form, realist writing will be executed with the objective effacement of the dispassionate reporter.

The critical term 'realism' in literary history emerged in the nineteenth century, denoting a literary movement in prose fiction usually attributed to Balzac in France. In his attempt to establish realism as a major literary genre, Balzac saw himself and his contemporary realists as scientific historians, recording and classifying the social life of France in a way which involved exhaustive detailed reportage of the physical minutiae of everyday life. So the realist writer becomes a social historian, with accuracy and completeness of description as his or her goals. In his definition of realism, Roger Fowler states that '(a)ll theories of

realism, however sophisticated, rest on the assumption that the novel imitates reality, and that that reality is more or less stable and commonly accessible' (Fowler, 156). But difficulties arise when accounting for 'accuracy', 'completeness' and 'imitation'. Words on a page cannot imitate three-dimensional reality. Completeness is a fallacy since all writing involves selectivity, and pure objectivity must also be discredited as each author is unique and so a certain personal bias is inevitable. In attempting to produce the impression of unselected actuality, the realist steers clear of stock literary situations - the traditional boy-meets-girl story, rags-to-riches plots, tidy resolutions, happy endings or successful quests. His or her material must be as free as possible from all literary associations and traditions, keeping rather to what is common to first-hand living experience. And as F. M. Perry remarks in The Art of Story-Writing, '(e)specially must it not come trailing clouds of glory from the literature of romance' (Perry, 88).

Aware of this, Fowler points to the distinction between art and history or art and life. As he puts it: 'whatever the relations of his art with the "realities" of society, (the story writer) is finally involved in the making of fictions, and has responsibilities to form that the historian or sociologist has not' (Fowler, 155).

Many kinds of realism exist and all fiction relates in some way to the general complex of realism, but the more an author becomes involved in form, in narrative structuring, symbolic patterning or linguistic design, the further s/he has moved from the specific theory of realism. Whereas the romance embraces form in the shape of plot, closure and a more or less traditional structure, realism, like life, has no organic pattern. By its very nature it is open-ended, casual, haphazard. When we impose form upon a story it becomes art and art is an imaginative creation and therefore in opposition to realism. Yet both realism and the romance are creating illusions, linguistic illusions of different aspects of human life - the perceived and the conceived. And as J. P. Stern points out in his book On Realism, the illuminating quality of realism for him is its connection between life and literature and of the involvement of language in both (Stern, 31). As a corollary then, the romance could be said to achieve the connection between the **spirit** and literature, manifesting itself through a different, less literal apprehension of language.

Roger Fowler exposes some problems associated with realism. For example, when Fowler discusses Ian Watt's contribution to realism, he discovers further notions which do not square with reality. Watt, in The Rise of

the Novel, specifies as a defining element of realism, "the adaptation of prose style to give an air of complete authenticity," and takes as models of authentic report the novels of Defoe and Richardson' (Fowler, 156-7). The implication is that the author writes the neutral prose of an impartial journalist without mysticism, allegory or metaphor, so that reality or his/her image of reality, may seem more purely itself. If these ideal specifications were assiduously applied and linguistic transparency achieved, then the work undertaken would be 'a flawless mirror to the world', but since language is never neutral, such a text is impossible (Fowler, 157).

David Lodge in The Modes of Modern Writing puts forward a scholarly interpretation of realism. He acknowledges that a verbal text can never be mistaken for the reality it refers to and gives this working definition of realism in literature: 'the representation of experience in a manner which approximates closely to descriptions of similar experience in nonliterary texts of the same culture. Realistic fiction, being concerned with the action of individuals in time, approximates to history: "history is a novel which happened; the novel is history as it might have happened" as the Goncourt brothers put it' (Lodge, 25). Lodge maintains that a concept of history will serve as a point of reference for measuring realism in fiction (Lodge, 26). He agrees too

that in a simple sense realism is the art of creating an illusion of reality, although, as he says, 'one hundred percent success in this enterprise equals failure. Trompe l'oeil art only becomes art at the moment we recognize how we have been deceived' (Lodge, 25). But when it comes to his discussion of what he terms 'an orthodox example of realism' in Arnold Bennet's The Old Wives' Tale, it seems to me that he misses the point.

In a section entitled 'Problems and Executions', Lodge deals with three writers' executions of a hanging scene. However, the passages he quotes from Bennett's novel, it seems to me, have enormous allegorical and romantic significance in their connotations. They portray the observations and reactions of the heroine, Sophia, abandoned on her honeymoon by her husband in the bedroom of a dingy hotel overlooking the square where the execution is to take place. Lodge quotes from III, iii, 4 of The Old Wives' Tale:

In a corner of the square she saw Gerald talking vivaciously alone with one of the two girls who had been together. She wondered vaguely how such a girl had been brought up, and what her parents thought - or knew!....Her eye caught the guillotine again, and was held by it. Guarded by gendarmes, that tall and simple object did most

menacingly dominate the square with its crude red columns. Tools and a large open box lay on the ground beside it (Lodge, 28).

Later, she is awakened from a doze by

a tremendous shrieking, growling and yelling: a phenomenon of human bestiality that far surpassed Sophia's narrow experience.... 'Why do I stay here?' she asked herself hysterically. But she did not stir. The victim had disappeared now in the midst of a group of men. Then she perceived him prone under the red column, between the grooves (Lodge, 29).

Lodge quotes at greater length to give a fuller picture, but I have merely extracted the relevant sections for debate. The execution is clearly perceived on two levels - the conscious and the unconscious. Bennett develops images that bind intimately the actual sight being presented with the subjective states evoked in the viewer so that Sophia's horrified reactions to the execution parallel her unconscious emotions regarding her own violation, the obviously brutal experience of her loss of virginity, her husband's adultery and his sexual exploitation of her. Lodge himself discusses the erection of the red columns in Freudian terms:

Red is the colour of passion, of sexual sin...the colour of blood (which is shed at deflowerings as well as at beheadings) and of the erect male sexual organ. We need look no further to explain why Sophia's gaze keeps returning with horrified fascination to the 'red columns' of the guillotine which 'had risen upright from the ground' (as though by their own volition) and beside which she observes 'a large open box' - presumably a receptacle for the head, but also a classic female symbol in Freudian dream analysis. At the climax it is surely not only Rivain's head, but Sophia's maidenhead, and by extension her inviolate self, that lies 'prone under the red column'...awaiting the brutal and irreversible stroke (Lodge, 31-2).

And yet, although these passages are permeated with the kinds of symbolism and psychological implication which evoke a subjective response, Lodge classifies Bennett's mode of expression as realism. Phallic guillotines, he admits, are not the kind of thing we expect to find in realistic fiction. 'But if there is any truth in the Freudian account of the mind, there is of course no reason why such things should not appear in the literary rendering of "reality". The point' (he says at the end) 'is simply that in realism we have to look very hard for

them, we have to go down very deep to find them, because "in reality" they are hidden, latent, suppressed' (Lodge, 32).

The content of Bennett's rendering, I would want to argue, has a convincingly realistic level, but in view of what that level disguises, it could be termed neither an objective nor a dispassionate account. It is deliberately shaped and controlled to parallel the latent content of a primal scene. What Lodge is analysing then is not theoretically realism. Realism is empirical rather than conceptual and any mental apprehension of the latent elements in literature is the work of the imaginative, inductive mind. Bennett's expression is inspired with the spirit of romanticism for it conveys a state of sensibility in which the ideas appeal to the unconscious in us. And as Mario Praz states in his book, The Romantic Agony, 'It is not the content which decides whether a work should be labelled 'romantic' or not but the 'spirit' (Praz, 11). Once we enter the realm of the psyche where, by a process of transference one set of images, quite selectively described, calls up another pattern which illuminates the interior life and the repressed emotions of a character, it is my belief that we are profoundly engaged in a **romantic** rendering of a situation. Surface realism, that is, yields to romantic essence.

Thus, romance and realism are not, as Lodge appears to believe, two unrelated quantities. In attempting to classify realism as a critical term to identify the essential nature of a piece of literature, Lodge does not perceive that romance and realism are both illusory constructs and that they coexist on a continuum or axis which runs through any work of fiction.

Defined thus, it is this romantic element in the method of fiction writing which, I propose to argue, is intrinsic in the short story whether the work is conveyed in realistic terms or not. In the belief that the century of short fiction I study, 1865 to 1965, demonstrates an interaction between realism and romanticism, I shall in this dissertation be investigating the relationship of the two in representative New Zealand texts. More specifically, the thesis attempts to establish the intrinsic presence of romance in the short story despite the alleged realistic tradition of New Zealand literature.

Another question I shall be considering is whether the romance factor in New Zealand short fiction operates, as Gillian Beer suggests, as 'a peculiarly precise register of the ideals and terrors of an age' (Beer, 58). If my theory is correct, then the short stories should offer evidence of the 'distinctive psychic stresses' (Beer, 58) and of the prevailing climate of the eras to

which they belong. I shall therefore be looking particularly at the effects of the romantic element in the fiction in the following three chapters which focus, in chronological sequence, on the colonial period, the war years and postwar fiction to 1965.

I conclude my research in 1965 because the postwar period marks the end of an era. The approximate hundred year span covered in this project illustrates the developing pattern and coalition of romance and realism in the short fiction which is the particular phenomenon I am interested in. The writing after 1965 is of a quite different and diverse nature and demands a thesis of its own.

CHAPTER 1

The Early Colonial Narrative: 1865 - The Great War

The colonial period on the whole preserved the received British conventions of romance in New Zealand short fiction, but very early there was a demand for writers to incorporate the local reality in their stories. More importantly, the form began to serve as a mode for orienting the settlers in the strange and primitive land to which they were committed. Very few colonial narratives, that is, do not reflect in one way or another an anxiety about identity or the emotion evoked in the dilemma of reconciling Home and home. In this chapter, I focus on the influence of the magazine and its effect on the realism and romance content of the New Zealand short story, and since (as already noted), the short story is an ideal form for comprehending the psychology of the impulse behind the writing, I shall be exploring the rhetoric to decide whether the country's short fiction does offer 'a peculiarly precise register of the ideals and terrors of (the) age' (Beer, 58).

Lydia Wevers comments in The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature that '...the short story has enjoyed a privileged status in New Zealand and, more than the novel, been the genre in which the preoccupations of a colonial and

post-colonial literature have worked themselves out' (Wevers, 203). In suggesting reasons for this phenomenon she writes:

If breaking away from Great Britain is articulated in a hunger (as the literary magazine Phoenix put it in 1932) for words that give us a 'home in thought', the characteristic fictional form of these words in New Zealand for a long time was the short story, perhaps because the problematic questions of separation, race, culture, and identity which constrain and shape an emerging national literature can be more comfortably articulated in a genre which does not imply resolution (Wevers, 203).

Traditionally, it is the novel which focusses interest on the course and outcome of events and which has an organized progression towards resolution of issues, whereas the short story, because of its necessary concentration, is limited to 'a certain unique or single effect' (Abrams, 158), and since its details are devised to carry maximum significance, so it can subtly express emotional tension or a state of mind. Wevers' claim for the short story being 'the characteristic form...in New Zealand for a long time' owes a great deal to the influence of the magazine.

The Influence of the Magazine

The popularity of the journal and the magazine in the colonial period contributed enormously to the prevalence of, and longstanding preference for the short story in New Zealand, for it was, because of its brevity and nature, the genre most sought for serial publication. And since magazines catered to a variety of interests, from able thinkers' views on the questions of the day to reviews of the arts, its readership was large and varied. Consequently, the fiction published in these early journals was widely read and provided a significant part of the country's cultural entertainment.

Moreover, what the magazine editors were prescribing was crucial to the acceptance of work and therefore to the kind of fiction presented as 'literature' to the New Zealand public. Some background helps to explain how a cultural conflict arose in fiction and, not surprisingly, how it also matched writers' personal cultural dilemmas. The object of The New Zealand Illustrated Magazine, for example was -

to have a Magazine with a distinctive New Zealand colouring, one which will have for its aims the encouragement of the best Literary and Artistic Talent which we have in our midst....(and further)

a publication, the artistic merit of which shall in every way equal its high standard of literary excellence (NZIM, ii, 1889).

Proprietors of magazines had, it seems, theoretically similar aims. In its first issue in July, 1889, Zealandia, 'A Monthly Magazine of New Zealand Literature, by New Zealand Authors', set out the scope and goals of the publication:

The promoters of this magazine feel that another vehicle for the conveyance of the productions of English authors to the New Zealand literary market altogether superfluous. Colony though it may be, New Zealand is a nation - not yet beyond its embryonic form, but still a nation: and to the realisation of this truth is due the fact that Zealandia has been established as a distinctively national literary magazine. Its contributors will be all New Zealanders, and no subject will be dwelt upon in its pages that is not of interest, directly or indirectly, primarily to New Zealanders....But, whilst it is intended to assist New Zealand authors, and, in fact, **in order** to assist them effectually, rigid care will be exercised as to the quality of the literary pabulum provided in Zealandia's pages. Although special pains will be taken to bring forward rising authors of promise,

care will be taken to see that they **are** of promise, and also that each number of Zealandia is sufficiently ballasted with the work of tried writers to give it weight (Zealandia, 2 Vol.1 No.1).

In effect, a **national** prose was being solicited from people who were essentially British. The style and tone of the fiction of this era was influenced by the largely Protestant and predominantly English and Scottish middle class settler. Between 1870 and 1914, when the newspaper and magazine were a developing consumer item, the demand was for a combined escapist yet (paradoxically) moral and educational fiction for publication. Some of the writing of the period was intended for a 'Home' audience rather than a local one, and the graphic descriptions of the New Zealand landscape, its flora and fauna, so important to publishers, established a means, prior to photography as a medium, of portraying the local milieu to an antipodean reader. For the same reason, stories of the Maori appeared regularly, especially in the New Zealand Illustrated and New Zealand Railways magazines, but these contributions tended to be excruciatingly inauthentic and in most cases, primarily designed to bolster a sense of the exotic. Nevertheless, this documentary impulse to provide literary snapshots or 'pen photographs' (WHN, 22), of the newly settled land was a powerful factor affecting the proportion of realism in the stories which would normally have conformed much more to the traditional

romantic mode of expression. The journal publication then, was a phenomenon which was instrumental in shaping the pattern for the country's developing short fiction.

W. H. New's research on the art of the short story in Canada and New Zealand confirms the magazine's influence on the New Zealand short story. He notes five types of prose being attempted in the periodicals of this colonial era, which led eventually to the birth of 'the sketch' and hence to a more realistic mode of expression. New describes them as

documentary accounts of things seen and life lived; political and religious essays; romantic fictions made out of the conventional trappings that were borrowed from other traditions (oriental tales, tales of court, historical adventures); romantic fictions set in local landscapes (often a cross between the authentic and the stereotypical, depending on the author's experience); and dialect attempts (usually comic in intention) to record various kinds of character and 'low life' within the social structure (WHN, 20).

From this 'fictional miscellany' began a melding of several of the 'types' and it was the emerging model, the sketch, which New concludes established the character of early New

Zealand prose publication (New, 21).

Although magazine editors were stipulating a soundly New Zealand literature, it proved difficult to break ties with England, and any such 'distinctive' fiction only fitfully filtered through the very early writing.

William Freeman, Zealandia's editor, more honest about the prevailing taste of editors, revealed his personal preferences following those of the proprietors in the first number:

However successful we may be in establishing a national literature in New Zealand, no lover of the true and beautiful would wish to shake off the pleasant bondage of the British master-minds of the literature of their younger days. Imperial Federation may, probably is, steadily approaching - and a good thing too, from a purely practical point of view: - but it never will bind the British in England to the British in New Zealand, mind to mind and heart to heart, half as closely as a common literature (Zealandia, 3, Vol.1 No.1).

Such was the dichotomy facing writers of early colonial prose, and many of the stories, given the local setting as a

token gesture, teetered incongruously between cultures. They remain as evidence that their authors were torn both personally and artistically between a British romantic tradition and a stark New Zealand realism.

On a more prophetic note, H. A Talbot-Tubbs, writing the 'Introductory' for the founding issue of The New Zealand Illustrated Magazine, on the subject of a distinctive New Zealand literature, pronounced that

There comes a time in the history of every colony - at least every colony of British origin - when the new country ceases to be a mere appanage of the old. The offshoot sends down roots of its own into a soil of its own, and finding there sufficiency of nourishment, no longer draws the sap from the parent stock. The connecting limb, atrophied, decays; the new life "finds itself" (NZIM, 1, October, 1899).

However, the 'first fruits' of this new strain of production took some time to ripen and though the realism of local colour and setting was in a manner being represented, this thesis proposes that considerably more was being confessed.

Typical examples illustrating the colonial wrench are stories such as 'The Little Mother' by Keron Hale (another

pseudonym for Edith Lyttleton), published in the October 1899 issue of The New Zealand Illustrated Magazine, Edith Woolcott's 'Judy: An Old Fashioned Girl', appearing in the August 1902 issue, and a story by William Freeman himself entitled 'Led by a Child: or The History of a Christmas Box', from the December 1889 issue of Zealandia.

Since magazine editors of the period were soliciting high standard, 'literary' contributions, the popular love story, to be beyond reproach and to justify publication, was invariably a 'parable' as well. The plot in Keron Hale's story turns on the heroine's self-sacrificing rejection of the man she loves. Rather than admit that the responsibility of bringing up her motherless brothers and sisters prevents her from accepting his offer of marriage, Molly feigns indifference.

The most striking feature of this narrative is its sense of order - a quality which recommended itself to turn-of-the-century editors. Leading up to the arrival, and ending with the departure of the lover, the story's palindromic form produces that sense of 'imported' conventional completeness. Because of the woman's sacrifice, the fictional situation maintains its status quo, causing no outward disruption to the order of society - 'only the light brushing hoof beats of a horse's quick canter over the springy tussocks' re-echo to haunt the little mother. The emotional passages, emphasizing

Hale's moral theme and the heroine's purity of spirit, draw heavily on a Victorian use of pathos and sentimentalism. Based on British literary values, this is the type of romance, 'that comes trailing clouds of glory', to which Perry referred when he sought the antithesis to realism. Hale's narrative structural control reflects the social control by traditional English society, especially on women trapped by responsibility and bound by the religious doctrines of the day. In a wider sense, the plot records the sacrifices made by the pioneering women living in the backblocks of New Zealand, women obliged to forego their hopes and dreams of personal happiness in a moral sense of duty for the colonial cause.

Hale's Canterbury Plains setting, however, is an attempt to represent realistically what it is like to live in these primitive conditions, in an iron-roofed shack for example, with 'smoke-stained walls', with the heat and dust, isolated from civilization, and bare tussock land as far as the eye can see. Hale, like so many colonial story-tellers, is torn by the impulse to expose the reality and the impulse to idealise it to make it bearable. Using this type of realism in its natural starkness defies picturesque presentation, and for many colonial writers the romantic instinct to order and to refine the piece of work they were creating (and in the process, to order Nature itself) proved too strong to resist. Hale in fact civilizes 'reality'. Seeking to appeal, she

offers romanticised versions of certain objects and events, for example, when her heroine, Molly, plucks a branch off the brutally thorny gorse bush:

A large bush of golden gorse - the only flower within miles - grew near the doorway; she broke off a piece and slipped it in her waist-belt (NZIM, 42, October, 1899).

Handling the gorse is possibly an unconscious metaphor for the life of the colonial women - an idealistic attempt to see only the beauty and stoically to disregard the pricks.

Hale makes frequent reference also to the flies which are part of back-blocks reality. Yet, although they are germ-laden vermin that befoul everything they crawl over, she makes no complaint of their pestilence: somewhat like pets, they are 'frolicksome' and they 'saunter':

Did Con know, as he grunted uneasily in his sleep, and aimlessly slapped at a frolicksome fly sauntering over his wee snub nose, that he was deciding the destiny of two lives? (NZIM, 43, October, 1899).

Passages such as Hale contrived are amongst the many lines of glamorized reality that early New Zealand magazines bear

witness to (Footnote 1).

This narrative voice of colonial writing is one of the crucial techniques used to distance and alter the reality in an attempt to repress overwhelming feelings of homesickness and unease. In these idealised renderings it operated as a censoring device representing the inherent romantic desire for things to be as we would like them to be rather than as they are.

Edith Woolcott's work is a variation on the romantic Cinderella theme, in which Judy, the household drudge, constantly does without so as to lend or give to her numerous brothers and sisters, 'never expecting to see her money's shining equivalent returned to her hand' (NZIM, 359, Aug., 1902). Judy's first suitor transfers his affections to her attractive, accomplished sister, Eleanor. Eleanor marries the fickle Gilbert, whereupon the moralising voice of the narrator is raised, to tell us exactly what to think about this turn of events:

(I)t is a crime against God and against wise old Nature when such women as Judy are passed by and the fashionplates of the world, the thoughtless and the irresponsible, are chosen as the mothers of the future race. And though it is a sin very frequently committed, strangest of all, these

earth-angels themselves are the last to realise the fact (NZIM, 361 Aug., 1902).

We can sense here in the ring of righteous anger, the tension behind the words, and the moral and emotional urgency that presses the story into being. The tone is an indication, disguised in story-form, of the stirrings of women's agitation against a patriarchal society. They see men who are in search of a wife or partner judging women by false criteria, generally by superficial attractiveness, dress and social glamour, and disregarding the woman's mind, her real nature and genuine qualities of sensibility and kindness.

Meanwhile, unable to afford a trained nurse, Eleanor and Gilbert presume upon Judy to nurse their baby through a critical illness. Judy saves the baby's life and as a result, wins the admiration and the love of the doctor in attendance, the story ending, 'And so Judy came into her kingdom.' In a postscript to the story, it is explained that 'the drudgery of Judy's work was forever a thing of the past'.

Woolcott's intention here was to write a love story in which the **real** (Judy) triumphs over the romantic image (the sister) which runs counter to the medieval romance stereotypes in that the heroine is not a princess nor very beautiful - but a paragon of virtue nevertheless. Woolcott

has transformed the fairy tale into a modern-day drama; however, the structure retains its romantic conventions of a quest, a love story, moral message and happy ending. Admittedly, in the postscript, the narrator does say, 'This is not a romance, in the story-book acceptation of the term, but a chapter from a very real life' (NZIM, 364, Aug., 1902). This narrative form was a common type in colonial writing, the plot developing syllogistically by statement rather than suggestion - essentially, Judy is virtuous, God rewards virtue, Judy receives her reward. The modern reader is embarrassed by such overt evangelism and amused that Judy's reward should be bestowed at the end in such a worldly manner. The lesson conveyed is that one has the potential by old-fashioned Christian charity to win a far richer earthly reward than can be bought by the polished elegance, wit and social accomplishments of the class-conscious prospector. At least Woolcott's work challenges the principles of the class system, but by content only. She has ignored the possibilities of a complementary union of form and content, and this story cannot transmit a convincing contemporary message if modally it remains entrenched in old world convention.

The author demonstrates the impulse to imitate life and the impulse to transcend it, but her story fails to reconcile the realistic and romantic components. The perennially existing conflict in this type of narrative is between plots

of moral rectitude with idealised heroines, and the attempt to represent reality. And, although neither Woolcott nor Freeman attempted any more than a nominal sense of New Zealand in their writing, Woolcott has symbolically registered her protest against the British Commonwealth patriarchal society.

Although William Freeman's narrative is set in Christchurch, it still 'draws the sap from the parent stock', in that his short story, 'Led by a Child', is possibly the purest piece of Dickensian writing outside Dickens's own. Consider the opening sentence:

In a suburb of Christchurch, occupied mainly by the poorer classes, at the corner of two of the humblest streets, is a general store bearing the legend, "James Baxter, Grocer and General Dealer"; the "James Baxter" very large and obtrusively distinct, and the "Grocer and General Dealer" very small and smeary (Zealandia, 362).

Imitative too of a Dickensian form of realism, Freeman's detailed impressions here seem specifically designed to portray a vivid pictorial milieu for the story's action, until the reader perceives that the 'realism' is far from the accurate account it purports to be, and that in fact it is a quite cleverly-crafted mounting in which the gems of

Freeman's humour are to be set:

The door at the corner is a low-browed, badly painted, blistered, ill-used, narrow portal, with a dirty fan light over it. It is studded with projecting nails, on which various bundles of brushes and miscellaneous odds and ends are displayed during the day, but which are considerably left free to engage the very serious attention of the casual passer-by at night (Zealandia, 362).

Unlike the Russian realists, Freeman's prefatory emphasis on the mean and squalid is not a search for the truth in reality but merely a technical foil to accentuate, at the story's close, the improved quality of life won by the redeeming love of the child, Mary. Again in the received nineteenth century romance tradition, plot and moral message are fused. A baby son is born and dies, Mary as a mother figure and a model of selflessness leads her selfish parents by example on an enlightened journey towards improved personal relationships. The consequent good-will in the house of Baxter has an economic spin-off, generating not only a more caring attitude by the parents, but an upward trend in the prosperity of the grocery business.

Beginning by stressing Baxter's sourness in relation to

the depressed state of trade and ending tidily with his financial success, this story reinforces my point that early colonial literature was steeped in the values of a well-established capitalist society. That unspoken desire, couched in the romantic elements of the plot, for all its moral intention, reveals the strong bourgeois instinct of the age.

The stories chosen for analysis are about courtship and society, love and money, honour and class: they are representative of the type of short fiction that dominated the periodicals of the late nineteenth century (H.End, viii). There were others of course - sea-faring tales, European-told tales of the Maori such as 'The Burning of Kororareka', printed in Zealandia Vol.1 No.2, a highly romanticised version of Hone Heke's predicament, by "Jessica"; and the occasional Gothic horror story appeared, such as Edwin Wooton's macabre 'Answer of the Dead', published in Zealandia Vol.1, No.3, 1889 and reminiscent of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. But even in these latter stories, the general tendency of authors was similar to those of the narratives discussed. In spite of the editorial call for New Zealand colour in its contributions, it was clear that for this generation of writers the reality of New Zealand had little bearing on the short fiction.

The discussion, however, reveals three important

issues - that the reality reflected in the work was British, that literary merit was being equated with moral message, and that conventional 'order' was clearly regarded as an essential virtue by editors, both in narrative content and form.

The existence of order in the content of stories revealed itself in the zealous use of moral themes which demonstrated deference to a higher order and to a society operating on strict religious principles. This put constraints on fiction writers, inhibiting originality and flair. For example, it perpetuated the dual role of romantic and Christian love in the stories, characteristic of the medieval romance genre figuring the exemplary hero crusading in the name of hierarchical order against evil. Formal order in the fictions usually involved a clearcut plot, decisive endings and persistent narratorial asides to ensure explicit interpretation of meaning. In addition, the order imposed on the landscape in many stories contravened the expression of a true realism, and this accounted for the artificiality of so many of these narratives.

Victorian New Zealand texts were deliberately explicit in a moral sense, deliberately non-elided. Writers, reflecting the repression of their society, did not offer in their fiction 'a special place for the

workings of the imagination' (Hanson, 25), and the last thing they wanted was for the reader's desire to enter the text. Conscious of its power to induce emotion, writers controlled language vigilantly too, even in sentimental scenes (which were usually directed to a moral purpose) so that any romantic effects of desire in the language evoked by metaphor and connotation were in most cases unintentional. Nevertheless, as illustrated, the short story could still be tapped productively to demonstrate the spirit of the age.

Victorian order, however, so constrained the romantic and realistic aspects of the fiction that the quality of the writing was adversely affected. The result was a singular triteness in nineteenth century magazine publications which, I believe, concealed the general angst of the 'Victorian' repression/expression dichotomy. And, on the one hand, writers were having to come to terms with colonial cultural tensions and on the other they were attempting to reconcile the demands of publishers with their own literary inclinations.

The new society, it seemed, was unconsciously expressing its unsettled state through its literature. As the analyses show, the failure to integrate successfully the romantic with the realistic elements of the short fiction - that is, the formal aspects of story-telling

with the reality of life in the new country - reflects, I think, the inability of writers to face the reality of their adopted environment. Many a place-name dropped at the beginning of a story did for a local setting, but the fictional characters were still moving in a highly-wrought civilization not in the least relevant to a New Zealand way of life. The practice emphasized a condition something like the wrench of transplantation which Allen Curnow perceived and expressed in so many of his poems, that feeling of colonial ambivalence that 'stands in a land of settlers/With never a soul at home' (Wedde, 198).

It was obvious from the romantic structures and the desires underlying their fiction that these writers found it yet too difficult to embrace the new land in their literature. In fact they clasped all the closer the old world conventions as though for security. But by about 1910, redoubled efforts by local magazines to provide a New Zealand literature for New Zealanders and continued concern for a standard of literary excellence, produced some encouraging results (Footnote 1). For the first time a faint sense of literary identity began to emerge from colonial writing. The change was neither immediate nor all-encompassing, but writers such as Blanche Baughan, Alfred Grace, William Baucke and G. B. Lancaster each demonstrated distinctive literary talent in presenting realistically life in the local environment; yet even so,

their stories unwittingly disclosed the predominant fears, ideals and desires of the pioneer people.

Their efforts too were among the first signs of the narrative developing into the short story as a form of art, the possibilities of which had been for so long neglected. In this art form, as Alfred Grace points out in an article for The Triad condemning the standard of current fiction in the major English Christmas numbers, 'the short story...is so pliant, so effective...its very character eliminates all that is superfluous, tedious, and prosy; in the hands of a master it is superlative, impelling, irresistible' (Triad, 33, Jan. 1911).

I have tried to account for the general impression that because realism was on the rise and because the genre was changing, romance in the New Zealand short story was therefore being phased out. What actually happened was that although romantic conventions were beginning to yield to a much more open form and to writers' efforts to anchor their fiction into the specifics of the local landscape, the changes made little or no difference to the romantic character of the short story. It was still possible to read through it the suppressed motives and emotions of the era.

Grace, Blanche Baughan and G. B. Lancaster are three

writers who, in exploiting some of the new possibilities, chose to convey their portrait of life in New Zealand through stories of relations between its indigenous people and the European settler.

If the love story dominated nineteenth century magazine fiction, a preoccupation with the Maori people became the focus for early twentieth century writers. The phenomenon, which included anthropological studies of Maori culture and language, is evidenced by the unprecedented number of Maori fables and myths, legends translated from the Maori and simply pure fiction about the Maori, published in New Zealand periodicals between 1900 and 1914. Were these writers concerned, as Alfred Grace was, to preserve in literature tales of a dying race? Did they think, as Patrick Evans suggests in his Penguin History of New Zealand Literature, that Maori culture would create a genuine basis for a national literature? (Evans, 47) Or perhaps, in this era of growing racial consciousness following the signing of the Treaty, it was an attempt to establish a culturally acceptable literary form. Whatever else they were intending, one thing was clear, that these authors were expressing in their stories the prevailing feeling of intense sensitivity to and fascination for the natural state of the Maori, and clearly envying a people who are impulsive and emotional in contrast to our own European

restraint and rationality.

Lydia Wevers makes the point that '(v)ery often it is a story of desire, the desire of colonial characters to assimilate or be assimilated by the other, the colonized race, which possesses primitive powers, supernatural knowledge and powerful emotion' (OHNZL, 206), and while I agree that the phenomenon is based on desire; rather than a wish for assimilation of one race into another, I believe this preoccupation with the Maori simply disguises a romantic desire to revert to an original state, to quit the fraught capitalist 'rat race' and return to the imagined Utopian state of primal innocence and freedom. This is a recurring archetypal image from the 'collective unconscious' which embodies that familiar primitive urge to strip off and run naked in the garden again.

Blanche Baughan is one of the first to challenge the literary conventions successfully to present an accurate imitation of life as it is seen. She achieves in her sketch of the old Maori woman in 'Pipi on the Prowl' (first published in 1908 in a Christchurch monthly newspaper, Current Thought) an unprecedented authenticity in a story which is apparently consistent with historical fact. In the words of Elizabeth Webby and Lydia Wevers; it is 'the beginning of a literature specific to its time and place and not merely an outpost of distant culture' (H.End., x).

Through her characterisation, Baughan, in a manner not unlike Katherine Mansfield's, manages to suggest some of the effects of European colonization on the Maori - in the generation gap between Pipi and her grand-daughter, for instance, and in Pipi's attitude to Pakehas (H.End., x).

Baughan shows Miria, who is married to a Pakeha, striving to be 'European', aping the fashions and manners of the British and thus demonstrating how her cultural perception has been altered. Miria now finds Pipi, her grandmother, an embarrassment and tries to make her conform to European standards and values. But, through her fiction, Baughan draws us into the natural and uninhibited world of the Maori. Here, we willingly 'change sides' and enter the conspiracy to outwit Miria who is acting the part of the Pakeha. We revel in the escape from the constraints of civilization and pressures to conform in much the same way that Pipi herself does. An example of Baughan's descriptive realism illustrates the European's 'cultivated' squeamish attitude to organic decomposition and decay and to the smell of rotting vegetation, eliciting the latent humour in the situation because we are put in a position where we may compare the two cultures side by side:

In the swamp on the other side of the long white bridge, dark manuka-bushes with crooked stems and shaggy boles, like a company of uncanny crones

under a spell, stood knee-deep in thick ooze;
some withered raupo desolately lined the bank
above...

With brightened eyes, with uncouth gestures of
delighted haste, out across the bridge scurried
Pipi, slithered down into the swamp, clutched with
eager claws at a muddy lump upon the margin, and
emitted a deep low grunt of joy. Old snags, quite
black with decay, lay rotting round her, and the
stagnant water gave forth a most unpleasant smell.
But what is foulness when glory beckons through it?
Squatting in the slime, her tags and trails of
raiment dabbling in and out of the black water,
Pipi washed and scraped, scraped and washed, and
finally lifted up and out into the sunshine with a
grin of delight, a great golden pumpkin, richly
streaked with green (BB.BB, 4).

We are amused because we recognize the differences in values
and see something of the nonsense of our own. The Maori
woman's impulsive act is something we would not normally do,
for to European eyes we would look ridiculous or childish
wading through a foul swamp for a mere pumpkin, yet in one
sense, we identify with Pipi in this experience and can
appreciate the appetite and instinct for the hunt and the
natural satisfaction of gathering food, especially unexpected
'windfalls'. On the other hand, the metonymies of the

language strongly reveal how the European in colonial New Zealand is torn between cultures. There is something of a parable in the immersion in the swamp of 'thick ooze' and the finding of something so attractively described as the pumpkin. The language in this text is so loaded that it imparts a sense of horror, betraying what Baughan thinks of the local reality. It appears that she perceives it as obnoxious, exceptionally dirty (and in this she includes its indigenous culture), but that good things (the pastoral pumpkin) can be found in it.

When Baughan describes the swampy area that the Maori woman is about to enter she inadvertently reveals her discrimination. Baughan is clearly not comfortable with the environment or the Maori - so much so that her adjectives, similes and metaphors in the passage betray what she is desperately trying to repress and rise above. They conjure up an image of the cringe of distaste felt by an English woman of breeding confronted with a hitherto unimaginable filth. The repellent and sinister images are initially imposed upon the woman in the story and then transferred to the environment:

...dark manuka-bushes with crooked stems and
shaggy boles, like a company of uncanny crones
under a spell, stood knee-deep in thick ooze;
some withered raupo desolately lined the bank

above...

However, to extend the parable illustrating colonial optimism, we are meant to see that out of the 'black' and 'rotting...foulness' something fresh and good and golden can grow.

Since the reality described here is on the whole the unromanticised 'truth', we have a clear perception of the other, freer culture and we envy its fundamental spirit and tend to idealise its more earthy nature, and yet, as metaphorically illuminated, we still retain our traditional values from centuries of European civilization.

In direct contrast to the earlier Maori narratives, especially those like the formulaic 'Taitimu and Roma' by H. Bedggood (NZIM Jan.1900) and a serving of flummery in 'The Wooing of Hine Ao' by Johannes C. Andersen (NZIM Aug.1902), written expressly it seems to show off his considerable knowledge of Maori vocabulary and customs, Baughan's independence stands out: her fiction becomes the signifier of a change in the New Zealand short story. The distinction is important. Out of this stereotypical tradition of Maori maidens and brave sons of chiefs, and the hand-squeezing 'ropa' that triggers a romance, a tribal war and a happy marriage, steps Baughan with an original prose style and material that realises the milieu she writes about.

However, what sets Baughan apart, as well as her perceptive observation of human behaviour, is an organic unity of narrative which combines the techniques of realism with a romantic use of language. In this way the writer supplies enough of the reality we know to sustain our belief, and yet allows the reader the space to create a further imaginative dimension of the work, a dimension which the immediate past colonial writing inhibited. Thus, paradoxically, the less traditionally 'romantic' the story, the more scope there appears to be for the reader to put his/her romantic interpretation upon it.

In 'Pipi', Baughan's language connects the literature to life. Her keen understanding of how the Maori woman's mind works is expressed through a pattern of metaphors. Pipi's simple desires are to escape from her grand-daughter's constraining respectability, to smoke a pipe of tobacco and to enter into the joy of the hunt. Baughan's metaphors transfer the reception of events into Pipi's own thought sphere through images relevant to her known world, a world which revolves around satisfying the basic desires. When old Pipi, out on the prowl for kai and topeka, has finished exploiting a friendly passer-by and then wants her to go so that she can be alone to smoke the one mild cigarette she has been able to acquire from her, we read through Maori metaphors the old woman's thought processes which derive from

their strong cultural links with the land and the sea:

And now, how to get rid of this disappointment, this addled egg, this little, little cockle with the big thick shell? Aha, Pipi knows....she will suddenly forget all her English, and hear and speak nothing but Maori any more. That will soon scrape off this piri-piri (burr) (BB.BB, 11).

At the end of the day, Pipi recalls her good fortune - the jam licked off the sandwich she found, the golden pumpkin, the shilling given her for those 'blessed' pipefuls of real Derby tobacco, and Miria still unaware of her afternoon's free-lancing escapades - and again Baughan conveys the sentiment through that poetic inventiveness of metaphor which characterises the Maori:

Nor was even that all. By some extraordinary good management that she herself did not quite understand, she had eluded the hook as it dangled at her very lips while yet she had secured the bait...(BB.BB, 14).

Here, it is the romantic effects of metaphor which come to constitute a deeper sense of what being Maori means. Through her vital portrait, Baughan not only draws with sympathy a Maori of the old culture and spirit feeling the effects of

European civilization, but she becomes the faithful chronicler of an historic time and place. Writing like this sounds to me like the answer to an editor's prayer, for her fiction, like her poetry, as Patrick Evans so vigorously declares, 'is profoundly rooted **here**, nakedly and deliberately the product of where it was written' (Evans, 51).

And although much more realistic than what went before in its sense of local historic reality, the text is equally transcribable in romantic terms. The dynamics of its romantic and realistic components illustrates a cultural tension between the rational procedure of establishing another 'civilization' in this country modelled on European society and the irrational, romantic desire to revert to a lifestyle of Utopian simplicity.

Alfred Grace's satire, 'Te Wiria's Potatoes' is another Maori fiction which distinguishes itself by countering the escapist and idealizing impulses of the traditional colonial composition. It first appeared in the widely read Sydney Bulletin, where a number of early New Zealand stories made their debut. Like Baughan, Grace draws his characters from life - not from a single model but from keen observation of many life models whose characteristics he distills to construct a typical representation. And far from their being quaint examples of Pacific exotica, Grace's Maori are very

real people. In this portrayal of dealings between the white man and the Maori we see the indigenous race using their ingenuity to exploit the trusting Pakeha. The ironic humour of the situation derives from the arrogant, or naive, assumption of the European that everyone will operate within a European code of ethics.

The narrator begins with an oration expressing the European, Villier's (Te Wiria's) high regard for the Ngati-Ata and his patronage of these 'dispossessed lords of the soil' whom he considers 'down-trodden'. The ending is an ironic reversal of the original conception with the Maori ultimately riding roughshod over the Pakeha. Grace's method is refreshingly oblique, but, since the success of a satire depends upon the audience grasping the unspoken import of a work, it is a pity that Grace's finale sacrifices artistic subtlety to the older conservative explicitness. His last words are by today's standards an insult to the reader's intelligence:

And Tohitapu strode through the spell-bound
 Ngati-Ata, and resumed his interrupted meal, his
 meal of pork and baked potatoes - Te Wiria's
 potatoes (DD, 55).

Nevertheless in this story the narrator's tone of voice implies not the anticipated anger of the Pakeha at the theft

of his entire potato crop by the Ngati-Ata, but more of a sense of bemused admiration at the unscrupulous audacity of the Maori. The attitude is similar to the manner in which an indulgent parent delights in the enterprise and shameless exploits of a cherished offspring and then regales his or her friends with relations of the tale.

Through Grace's non-judgemental representation too, the simple, carefree lifestyle appeals and beckons to us. Theft, for example, becomes non-applicable. Grace allows us to appreciate that what the land yields belongs to the people of that land regardless of who legally 'owns' it or buys the seed and works to plant and tend the crop. The notion accentuates for the ethically-burdened European the complexities and the bureaucracy of our legal system and of the multitude of people employed merely to enforce what in our romantic fictional 'suspension of disbelief' now appears to be an over-civilization.

Edith Lyttleton, writing under the male pseudonym, G. B. Lancaster, and speaking through a male persona, presents the reader with what appear to be first hand experiences of outback life and the Maori. 'The Story of Wi', like most of her sketches, is a psychological drama exploring character and motive more than history and landscape.

Wi, an orphan at the age of six, is taken away from the pa by a man called Lane 'to be fashioned into a pakeha' (CRA, 199). The tragedy occurs when Wi sees the hypocrisy of the doctrine that all men are equal, yet, although a white man may marry a Maori woman, European society had an unwritten law forbidding a white woman to marry a Maori man until the third generation. What sort of equality is that, we are meant to ask ourselves, and what sort of God sanctions it?

Once again the Maori culture is being portrayed as the more genuine one, truer to nature's laws. Lane's attempt to assimilate the Maori into Pakeha culture fails because Wi detects the hypocritical codes that the European lives by and sees that Pakehas do not practice the egalitarianism that they preach. Implicit in the writing is a disillusionment with the counterfeit life we live in comparison with the Maori character that shames the pseudo-puritanism of the white race. Lancaster's description of Wi as a youth is a good example of the colonials' exalted perception of the Maori:

Providence had attended to the boy's outward person with more elaboration than was absolutely necessary; and it is certain that Lane gloried as deep in the well-hung limbs and clean-shaped face and neck as in the spirit that he had handled with

so much love until it stood up, unashamed and eager, and fearless with the childlike faith that is altogether Maori. Wi poised his body as no Englishman can, or ever will do, and his lines, though fine and thoroughbred, already gave promise of enormous strength (CRA, 203).

The object of discussing these better examples of Maori fiction is to show how writers were conveying in realistic terms the results of cross-cultural interaction, but also, either through fear or envy, the metonyms they chose betrayed their desire for the powers and lifestyle of the indigenous culture. Gunnar Backman points out in Meaning by Metaphor that 'according to the metaphor/metonymy model, the Realist writer constructs his vision of reality through the selection of metonymies, contiguous details from reality, and these are understood by his readers as factual representations of the real'. Backman further suggests that 'metonymy transforms itself into symbolic detail, symbolist metaphor' (Backman, 56.) Therefore, by being receptive to the metonyms supplied by the writer, the reader recreates the text from elements that are capable of revealing the suppressed terrors and ideals which lie below the surface of the story. So when Lancaster, speaking through the Maori character, writes:

"I am stronger than any man I have ever
stripped to. I am stronger than any man I have

ever seen, I think. And we Maori are not as you pakeha. Our passions have not had the centuries of repression. I have a very devil of a temper - you should know that - and it is so easy -" He ran his hand up his left forearm and flung it out in explanation. Maoris make half their speech with their bodies (CRA, 206),

her method is metonymic but in her selection of details involving Maori strength, for example in 'passion', 'devil', 'temper', and 'bodies', the details are inevitably made symbolic and serve the purposes of metaphor. The inherent fire and power of the Maori becomes at once a fear and a desire of the colonizing race. What I am attempting to prove here is that a metaphoric conception underlies virtually all constructions whether they are deliberately evocative expressions or not. Thus, we detect in this expression mixed emotions - a sense of guilt, the fear of being overpowered by the indigenous race and the wish to usurp their natural position as 'the feudal lords of Aotearoa', not to mention a repressed desire for the freedom to express uninhibited passion as they do.

By 1910, the publishers' spotlight was well and truly trained on the Maori. The practice of publishing alongside the fiction in magazines exquisite illustrations of Maori in national dress and many well-documented studies and articles

on the indigenous race - such as those written by James Cowan for the New Zealand Illustrated Magazine - emphasized the desire, especially of the authors of short fiction, to write the Maori into a new mythology that the Europeans were creating.

The number of stories written and published in magazines which include the indigenous race, shows the efforts of writers to comply with the editorial demand to write authentically about New Zealand, but although colonial storytellers went half-way towards a realistic representation of the Maori, almost without exception, they unconsciously transformed them into romantic creatures of legendary strength and mythical powers, into a people they portrayed as somehow more godlike than the European.

Early Trends

Periodical publication undoubtedly had a powerful effect on the trend of New Zealand's early fiction, however three avant-garde writers of this colonial era, Henry Lapham, Jane Mander and Katherine Mansfield, were extremely influential in providing, very early, an indication of the ways in which the short story was to evolve. In particular, their writing exemplified the trend towards 'the sketch' and hence towards

an authentic New Zealand realism.

Henry Lapham published a volume of stories, We Four, and the Stories We Told, in 1880, from which 'A Member of the Force' is one of the earliest New Zealand frontier tales, portraying prototypes of the 'mateship' concept which was to become so important a theme and so central to the image New Zealand presented through its literature. Lapham distinguishes himself as a pioneer of the realist tradition in this country's fiction. From the anecdotal structure of his tale, framed in its context of a series of yarns by a group of men drinking together in a pub, the reader infers that the narrator was present as a participant in the story's action. The illusion of reality is maintained by the reportorial style, by actual gold-fields' place names and the year mentioned, '-66 or thereabouts', **within** the inset story, and by the descriptions of the pub and the male camaraderie of the listeners and story-teller **outside** the framed anecdote.

Lapham's technique, intermittently animating the narrator and his audience, establishes credence and at the same time frees his form from the restraints of its inherited literary conventions. Moreover, as if recounting an actual experience, he keeps the work completely devoid of omniscience, limiting the narration to a single point of view. His strong realistic mode, however, encompasses a

romantic plot involving adventure, intrigue and love, at the height of which the chivalrous hero sets out on a dangerous mission to help his fellow man and is subsequently drowned crossing the flooded Waikaia River. Although this sort of drama does not answer the realists' prerequisite of 'unselected people doing unselected things at unselected moments' (Perry, 73), it is safe to say that Lapham's intention is not, on the other hand, to idealise or to moralise. Lapham refuses to let the romantic action undermine the overall impression of objective actuality that he undertakes to give. Although entertaining one's audience was the primary concern of most colonial writers, for Lapham, sustaining an impression of reality was as vital a literary objective. The mode, for one thing, suits the masculine company it addresses, and for another, careful judgement of the level of male tolerance of romance and flights of the imagination was a serious consideration for male writers of the time. As Philip Collins expounds in one of his Victorian Studies lectures entitled From Manly Tear to Stiff Upper Lip, any display of emotion had come to be regarded as 'bad form'. The doctrine behind this attitude derives from the 'tough' male image instilled in the education of boys - initially by Britain's Rugby School in the 1860's; then as the discipline became the accepted mode of behaviour, any self-respecting young man emerging from the Public School system was not expected to slacken his stiff upper lip to weakness of any description, least of all to what could be termed 'feminine'

sentiment (Collins). This concept, I believe, has been inextricably woven into the fabric of New Zealand literature.

Under such a discipline, male poets and fiction writers were definitely a suspect class. It was even more difficult for men in the colonies where a new confrontation with Nature required physical strength, stamina and courage. And as Jock Phillips points out in A Man's Country, '(i)n this environment a respect for strenuous muscular performance became a central element in the male culture' (Phillips, J., 17). Their only defence was to write male oriented stories in an aggressively masculine manner. Thus, certain literary themes and modes were rapidly adopted by male writers to counteract any suspicion of effeminacy - hence the frontier story and, what is more significant, a new appropriation of realism.

Lapham judged well despite the stiff upper lip. His story generates a nice tension between realistic and romantic components. The author instils no moralising antipathy in the reader for the wrong-doer, Smith, for in life we expect good and evil to be compounded in the human psyche, and here we observe the evidence manifested in Lapham's characters. In a bid to imitate the spirit of truth, he metes out reward and abuse regardless of desert in a manner which seems inevitable. Thus Brennan, the hero, loses his life in a courageous effort to save his badly injured attempted-

murderer, while Smith the unscrupulous, recovers and marries Brennan's sweetheart, who was incidentally a witness to Smith's skulduggery. These ironies bring us about as close to unregulated reality as fiction can.

Lapham's narration gives us a sense of the local colour of frontier life with details of gold claim partnerships, the danger, skirmishes, hardship, mateship and the pub as the hub of it all - conditions where men are forced into close comradeship. And the bonds of mateship, once cemented, are stronger than blood or wedlock, it seems. Though Jim, in his delirious agony, confesses his villainy, the loyal silence of his mate provides him with a lifetime's reprieve.

The story hints at the type of hero who was to become a legend in this country's fiction. As a New Zealand writer, Lapham would thus be judged 'successful' and 'authentic', for in attempting to portray his characters as members of a new force - the frontier male culture - he reassures the male population of their pioneering strength and their virility. But more than three decades would pass before Lapham's innovations became themselves New Zealand literary conventions.

Here, what is notable is that for the first time, New Zealand is being presented realistically; however, not in the manner of the French realists whose descriptions dwelt on the

minutiae of the situation they were portraying and which therefore provided a lead for the perceptive reader to discover the emotive dynamics which inspired the written word. Gunnar Backman, quoting Roman Jakobson, provides evidence for his argument by drawing attention to the fact that most realist writers digress to synecdochic details - from the plot to the atmosphere, from the characters to the setting (Backman, 56). It is from these selective and metonymic details that we are able to trace the influence of the author's focus and can see what inspires the actual story. Lapham's mode, however, is traditional enough to be utterly explicit, and his descriptions so general that we have few digressive details to lead our imaginations to symbolic solutions - except for Lapham's recurrent and centripetal attraction to the pub. His graphic portrayal of its atmosphere, warm hearth and companionship betrays, in one sense, its role as a substitute home, with the barmaid dispensing sustenance and cheer as surrogate mother or wife. The centrality of the pub in many colonial stories also highlights the feeling that although the frontier man was adrift in an unfamiliar environment, the pub was his refuge, a male preserve, always a place where his spirits were topped up, his masculine identity reinforced and his cultural anxieties assuaged. Significantly, it was the one place where the colonial man felt at home.

Women, however, were still writing about relationships

and love, though as Jane Mander demonstrates, not always as the conventional 'happy ending' romance. When women wrote as women, their stories often tended to evoke wrathful emotions against men. Mander, in a representative work, could write for the Illustrated in 1902 a story of forbidden love with a message that universalizes the loyal, intelligent woman's suffering because of men's prevailing attraction to the 'wrong' woman - the pretty empty-headed doll, the frivolous toy - a mistake, as her fiction stresses, that is too often realised too late. In a somewhat sentimental prose, Mander exposes the dilemma of the enlightened yet moral woman of the day. The anguish of her situation is concentrated in the lines,

And he knew all too well that the outward calm
of the woman beside him was but a mask that hid
as fierce a torrent as his own. And between
them there stood the strongest barrier that
Heaven and earth could make - a man's honour and
a woman's virtue (H.End, 98).

Gillian Beer's remark that the romance 'offers a peculiarly precise register of the ideals and terrors of the age', is reflected in Mander's story. In evoking a nostalgia for the loss of an ideal love/marriage, Mander was expressing the ambivalent desires of the women of the time. Marriage, a deep and lasting love, and as this story asserts, a

relationship with a man involving passion and intellectual equality, were the quests of the early twentieth century woman. Conversely, as the story implies, women of the age were angry at male chauvinism yet haunted by the terrors of spinsterhood, of years of childless, 'unfulfilled' existence stretching out ahead of them. The tormenting fear of being 'left on the shelf' drove women to compete in the marriage stakes by presenting themselves, against their better judgement, as marketable goods. Hence the bitter admission of the two sensible women in Mander's story:

'....And we are fools enough to bury our individuality, and groom our bodies to barter for the notice of such (men) as that'.

'We do it though,' said her friend...(H.End, 94)

Needless to say, the perpetual desire for a romantic union often outweighed even the love of one's children, as Jean Devanny reveals in her short fiction, 'A Perfect Mother' (H.End, 200). The themes and foci of these stories uncover the past and, if still rather too explicit, do offer an understanding of women's lives in colonial New Zealand. The romance, in conveying these desires and terrors, as Beer points out, 'forms itself about the collective unconscious of an age'. Thus, if well researched, it seems to me, the proposed romantic approach is capable of giving us a record of the emotions of the people it pertains to, a history of

what **motivates** the actions and events of the time. For, as Norman R. Phillips maintains in his book, The Quest for Excellence, men and women are governed on many occasions, more by emotion than by pure reason (Phillips, N., 8).

I have been selective, but have not I think misrepresented the situation. With few exceptions, the stories of the era indicate a cultural confusion, with the conventional European romance mode holding the dominant position and a version of the New Zealand landscape sitting uneasily upon the fiction. Colonial stories implicitly honoured the virtues of British civilization with its hierarchical order and its Christian morality, and structurally they upheld the order and closed forms of the romantic tradition. Emotive content was generally explicit. But the later colonial fiction was developing a tentative local realism of its own and, as I have been at pains to show, the major effect of this change was that it radically altered the explicit/implicit balance of emotional meaning in the stories.

Publishers and editors could not of course, be made to take full blame for the direction and trends of New Zealand writing. W. H. New suggests that the critics were in part responsible for this co-signatory effect of the fiction which led to the disparities of message and the sense of artistic inconsistency that prevailed in colonial literature. As New

puts it,

the critical impulse to locate value elsewhere - in Europe particularly - persisted, implicitly carrying a different message: that the colony must be incomplete outside Great Britain...meaning that local experience was deemed a fit subject for high art only if it was glossed over by the (British, foreign) conventions of romance. In practice, such a dichotomy between form and subject was not fixed, but its effects were to last well into the twentieth century, imposing covert restrictions on writers' techniques and directly affecting the vocabulary of critical judgment (WHN, 117).

The liberator was Katherine Mansfield. She set standards far ahead of her time, and her exceptional ability outmanoeuvred all such 'unchangeable' conventional impositions and critical expectations. In fact she began the modernisation of the New Zealand short story which included an innovative use of nineteenth century French realism. And, as the older romantic modes gave way to the more prosaic expression of realism, the surprising thing as I discovered, was that the 'romantic' emotion which, although not explicit any more, was still there: it merely needed different modes of interpretation to uncover it.

In her sketch, 'The Woman at the Store' (1912), Mansfield writes as a psychological realist. Her object is to reveal her character's response to life, to render the woman's state of mind without any direct interpretation or explanation. Now for the first time, the landscape is central to the story. Emotions are generated essentially by the experiences of living in this country. Mansfield's realism provides documentary descriptions of the landscape with apparent neutrality, but as Gunnar Backman has noted, '(s)ince the reality we perceive is shaped by cultural preconditions and personal experiences our personal language will reflect what that culture and personal world view is like (Backman, 49). Moreover, as already pointed out, the realist writer concentrates on the minutiae so that his or her focus and affect, that is, his or her emotive selection of such details allow us access to unexpressed meaning through their association of ideas. So while there is little betrayal of subjectivity in Mansfield's story, the discerning reader may follow the drift of her conception through the **contiguity** of terms to catch something of the oppressive, debilitating effect of the environment upon its inhabitants. For example, in the opening paragraph, we notice the interconnectedness of **dis-ease** with the **landscape**:

All that day the **heat** was **terrible**. The wind blew close to the ground - it **rooted among the tussock grass** - slithered along the road, so that the white

pumice dust swirled in our faces - settled and sifted over us and was like a **dry-skin itching** for growth on our bodies. The horses **stumbled** along, **coughing and chuffing**. The pack horse was **sick** - with a big, open **sore** rubbed under the belly. Now and again she stopped short, threw back her head, looked at us as though she were going to **cry**, and whinnied....There was **nothing** to be seen **but** wave after wave of **tussock grass**...and **manuka bushes** **covered with thick spider webs**. (CSKM, 561, my emphasis).

Through the sequence of seemingly unselected observations emerges a motif of suffering due to physical location. In this, Mansfield demonstrates a new refinement in New Zealand story-telling. Leaving behind the sentimental methods and transparent sermonizing of the older romance mode, she builds a subtle structure of reality from which **we** draw the romantic conclusions. This realistic account of the New Zealand landscape in relation to illness subtly conveys the symptoms of emotional instability which then, more or less insidiously, supplies the reader with an inductive diagnosis that environmental factors contribute to the woman being driven to murder.

Further, the woman whom we are told had 'been a barmaid down the Coast - pretty as a wax doll' and who had been heard

to say 'she knew one hundred and twenty-five different ways of kissing'(KM, 567), is described in her present state in the commonplace details of objective reportage. The reader will nevertheless draw from the superficial description of the woman, the ravages that the lifestyle and isolation have wrought upon her, and will perceive aspects of psychological damage from another quarter. Mansfield merely writes:

I smiled at the thought of how Jim had pulled Jo's leg about her. Certainly her eyes were blue, and what hair she had was yellow, but ugly. She was a figure of fun. Looking at her, you felt there was nothing but sticks and wires under that pinafore - her front teeth were knocked out, she had red, pulpy hands and she wore on her feet a pair of dirty Bluchers (KM, 563-4).

The portrait paradoxically evokes the woman who revelled in her desirability, because Mansfield has selected the popular features of female sexuality for men and subverted the alluring image of the blue-eyed blonde with curvaceous figure, appealing smile and attractive hands and feet. Mansfield's attention however, is focussed on the woman's loss, on the sense of disenchantment and the shattered romantic dream. Moreover, the woman remains nameless, a literary tactic which effectively makes her in one sense 'representative' of women, and in another, of the New Zealand

back-blocks dweller. Instead of the prince taking her off to the castle, he drops her in the wasteland of the New Zealand outback and disappears for months on end. She is stranded and withers away to a hag, borne down by childbearing and by the man who subjects her to it. Like a refrain she repeats, 'And wot for!...Over and over I tells 'im - you've broken my spirit and spoiled my looks, and wot for...' (KM, 569). The tragedy is the meaninglessness and emptiness of her life: and clearly she is resentful. The reader is now being subtly prepared to put the blame for the woman's present physical and mental condition on the husband.

In this way, Mansfield's artistic details show that the man and the environment contribute to the woman's manic depressive state. Through atmospheric details too, Mansfield reveals the effects of mental derangement in the woman, showing how resentment builds up and spills over, how romantic passion becomes a violent, avenging passion and reverts to sexual passion again when she invites the travellers in for drinks and takes a fancy to Jo. Using the same associative relation between environment and emotional state, Mansfield has the cumulative effect of the gathering storm outside keep pace with the rising passions of the woman and Jo inside the whare. To foreshadow the horror of the crime, Mansfield creates an air of gothic mystery. When the thunder and lightning reach a peak the storm breaks and the woman and Jo go off to the only bedroom, and the strange,

displaced child becomes so enraged at the altered sleeping arrangements that she draws the forbidden picture of the murder scenario. The woman's revenge is portrayed in symbolic terms in the sentence, 'the child had drawn the picture of the woman shooting at a man with a rook rifle and then digging a hole to bury him in' (KM, 572). The woman clearly assumes here the role of the male oppressor.

Mansfield thus bestows male power on a woman. It is not the first time in her fiction that Mansfield has women avenging men. In 'At the Bay' for example, using a variety of literary devices, she reveals the relief of the Burnell women when Stanley leaves for work. Even the maid Alice, washing the dishes, 'plunged the teapot (with its phallic spout) into the bowl and held it under the water even after it had stopped bubbling, as if it too was a man and drowning was too good for them' (TGP, 33).

That Mansfield's techniques are modern is evident in part by her rejection of explicitness. She has achieved deliberately and artistically the romantic effects that earlier (and many later) writers had only unconsciously disclosed. The stark geographical reality she portrays is matched by the outer form of the story, plotless and open-ended like a diary entry. We read what appears to be an objective reporting of facts but which, in a Mansfield story, are skilfully selected details preparing us for a dramatic moment. In 'The Woman at the Store' it is that flash of

electrified consternation when we realise the narrator's brother is in the next room making love to a murderess whose passions can switch from one extreme to the other because of her mental instability. The hopeless trap of her existence has caused a form of madness. And, because 'in metonymy, the term for one thing is applied to another with which it has become closely associated in experience' (Abrams, 62), what we have been able to infer from Katherine Mansfield's metonymic and symbolic detail is a universal sense of women's oppression, of things habitually bearing down upon them. On the one hand, we apprehend a strong feeling of female anger at male domination and on the other, the oppressive and debilitating effect of location and a woman's inability to escape it.

Thus, the documentary effect of the new realism which was so significant a part of 'the sketch', did not reduce the romanticism of the stories; rather it intensified the reader's role and made possible the new psycho-analytical method of interpretation whereby the repressed desires which provoke the chosen language may be discovered by decoding the writer's metonymic and metaphoric expression.

Notes:

1. Magazine illustrators were worse offenders still. Despite Hale's primitive evocation, the reader is deluded pictorially by the inset illustration of a sophisticated woman standing on a wide verandah with architectural features and surrounded by lush vines and vegetation.
2. W. H. New makes this point in discussing the development of the Canadian and New Zealand short story. He mentions the attempt by early writers to seek an appropriate form for the stories they wanted to tell and notes that '...by World War One, the two cultures - and the two literatures - would be markedly different, and writers had by then begun to document the nuances of voice and attitude that were to mark their separateness as a culture as well as to record the specifics of flora and fauna that marked their separateness of territory (WHN, 21).

CHAPTER 2

The Years Between the Wars: 1914 - 1945
and the propagation of a 'national realism'

The Anthologies

New Zealand Short Stories edited by O. N. Gillespie
(1930)

Tales by New Zealanders edited by C. R. Allen (1938)

New Zealand Short Stories edited by Dan Davin (1953)

The previous chapter has shown that most short fictions were first published in magazines, journals and newspapers and that the developing impulse was to address an explicitly local readership. But unless these short stories are anthologised or collected into single author volumes, they are lost to the general reader. The pattern of New Zealand short fiction therefore is, or should be, created by those anthologised writers who distinguished themselves from the wider context.

The three earliest anthologies of New Zealand short fiction cover the period from World War I to World War II and give an indication of the variety of stories and the enormous range of applications and concentrations of romanticism and realism that they encompass. The editors of these anthologies and their titles claimed that the stories were selected for their New Zealandness, though some have little obvious local content or setting. In this period, however, and amongst the diverse contents of these three collections resides the type of story which was to be hailed as the prototype of New Zealand short fiction - the kind of story which would mythologise certain national self-perceptions and a distinctive New Zealand reality. But the question was, **whose** self-perceptions and **whose** reality of New Zealand was to be portrayed as 'national'? Who took it upon themselves to determine what was or was not to be an authentic New Zealand work?

The answer is that it was a far from democratic decision and that it was not a thing that evolved naturally, since it was the Phoenix/Caxton school of male literati and its male coterie who chose as their model the Sargeson-style story to define the New Zealand scene and it was they who encouraged the type of realism which embraced this new fictional 'frankness'. It was these men also who were responsible for the muscular pioneering

image, the banal 'man alone' type of hero and the proletarian idiom which were imposed upon our society as typical of the New Zealand identity.

In this chapter, I intend to expose a literary misconception. I propose to show how this new breed of writers thought they had devised a mode and style of writing that was masculine and realistic and earthed or literally connected to the land, a mode they assumed for those reasons was anti-romantic. Yet, although this mode of writing was considered innovative, spare and starkly realistic and a break away from romantic writing, in fact it functioned as a facade that overlaid as much romantic desire as any medieval romance quest.

There are two issues here, but before examining the range and dynamics of romance and realism in the anthologised stories which provide evidence of the shift from imperial to national outlook, it is important first to understand how this group of radicals became the literary establishment, the methods they used to propagate what they deemed was national realism, and the effect they had on the evolution of the New Zealand short story.

The Rise of the Phoenix group:

The journal, Phoenix, was launched in 1932 by the Auckland University Literary Club. Run by a group of avant garde thinkers and edited by the Marxist, R. A. K. Mason, it published works by Mason, Fairburn, Allen Curnow, Charles Brasch, D'Arcy Cresswell and J. C. Beaglehole. Its power issued in the establishment of the first 'school' of New Zealand writing, created no doubt by selective publishing of like-minded and highly-opinionated young men. As Keith Sinclair declares in A Destiny Apart:

(These) writers of the 1930's were strangely unaware that they had any precursors. They often ridiculed those they knew of but, more than that, they seemed to suppose that they had invented New Zealand nationalism (Sinclair, 246).

For them, nationalising the literature meant severing all connections with Europe, obliterating all traces of the romance tradition and, in accordance with their Marxist inclinations, concentrating on the harsher realities of life and the plight of the working man.

Phoenix folded in 1933 but was superseded by the Christchurch left-wing journal, Tomorrow (1934-40), which became the new market for the poems and fiction of this school of writers. Denis Glover became a regular contributor and from 1935 onwards most of Frank Sargeson's

early sketches were published in its pages. And, as Patrick Evans notes:

(t)he paper was an ideal outlet for his (Sargeson's) radical prose experiments, and it is hard to imagine the twenty-eight stories he published in it being accepted anywhere else. Its keenness for changes in local culture, and even its limitations of space, may have helped him make his writing the remarkable innovation it seemed (Evans, 86).

The literary criticism for Tomorrow's pages was supplied regularly and primarily by a very able writer, Winston Rhodes, also a Marxist with anti-imperialist views. He too was striving to establish a national literature and his advice and stipulations for its production, clearly biassed towards a vernacular realism, were that writers should stop being exiles and should 'deal with the normal activities of ordinary men' (sic) (Evans, 87).

Knowing also the misogynistic tendencies of some of these writers, it is possible that Rhodes' use of the term 'men' alone here is not unintentional. The comment is a mere hint of the gender prejudice that these men exercised in attempting to exclude women's writing from mainstream

culture. It seems clear to me that they were reacting against the romantic bias and metaphoric expression of women's literature. For instance, in two statements in an unpublished article by R. A. K. Mason pronouncing judgement on New Zealand writing, much is obnoxiously implied about gender and about the writing of a certain expatriate woman author:

You cannot hope to make tobacco money in this country by decent writing....(I)n the matter of encouragement our newspapers rarely give heed even to the wisest words spoken from our midst, though they will duly waste print on any rot so long as you care to go to Europe and say it (Mason, 4).

Worse, in 1934, in an effort to gain ascendancy over other editors who managed literary pages, Denis Glover published a volume, New Poems, by Curnow, Fairburn, Mason and himself. Keith Sinclair notes the strength of their contempt for women's writing when he quotes Fairburn's remarks on this new volume. Fairburn hoped the work would establish "a kind of **Criterion**....A measuring rod...a sinister spectre at the junketings of the Menstrual School of Poets" (Sinclair, 248).

To discriminate against women writers on the basis of their cyclical and hormonal nature indicates that the

hostility of these men was associated with and directed against emotional, instinctive, romantic and hence (to them) unrealistic tendencies in women's writing, while the deflationary term, 'junketings', symbolizes men's superiority in its implication that the narrow sphere of domesticity represents a woman's entire and insignificant worldly experience.

Such brutal anti-feminine abuse too, only serves to convince us that they perceived women's writing as a threat to their own positions and aims as writers and that they regarded the writing of romantic fiction as unmanly, effeminate. In fact, being artists and intellectuals, the question of their masculinity was a constant concern to them, causing frequent over-compensatory reactions. In A Man's Country, Jock Phillips suggests reasons for this preoccupation. Accounting also for their class prejudice, he writes: 'There was the association of traditional high culture with aristocratic habits and patronage'. But, '(a)t the heart of the stereotype was a belief in the primacy of physical abilities and the all-round skills of the pioneer' (Phillips, J., 282). So marked was the effect on their writing that another critic, Kai Jensen, in a series of four radio lectures entitled 'The Writer and the Bloke', centres his entire literary discussion around this problem (Jensen, 26.9.91). In order then to avoid the dreaded stigma of 'effeminacy' these writers

stood united in promoting a form of realism based on a strong masculine representation of life from the rural and proletarian sector of society, exploiting 'toughness', celebrating the unintrospective by writing earthy dialogue and by establishing the hobo as hero. As a result, their writing, especially the poetry of the age, resounds with aggression and a singularly defensive macho bravado.

Their ventures however, were significant, and when Glover set up the Caxton Press in Christchurch to operate in tandem with Bob Lowry's press already printing their work in Auckland, the group was potentially dictatorial. Fairburn wrote to Glover, 'we ought if possible to keep this local publishing racket going. It's nicely under weigh now, and represents our **only** chance of Building Up a National Literature...' (Sinclair, 248). Moreover, the publication of poetry and fiction locally enabled the writers to abandon the practice of seeking London publishers, which effectively freed them from subjection to English taste and traditions (Sinclair, 248). By 1940 they were virtually in control of the reception, the writing and publishing of the country's literature. Dennis McEldowney remarks on the phenomenon in his chapter in the Oxford History of New Zealand Literature, 'Publishing, Patronage, Literary Magazines'. '(T)he Caxton Press', he writes, 'was defining not only its own role, but how New Zealand writing in the 1930's would be

seen for a long time to come' (McEldowney, 565) OHNZL).

Thus in league, these New Zealand male writers, like the French realists in their day, formulated a literary creed and, in a colonial sense, began a movement. They had conceived a mode and style of writing with which to typify the New Zealand lifestyle and dialect yet which depicted the country as a 'rural slum' peopled with illiterate sundowners, itinerant farm labourers and barflies - laconic, often objectionable characters whose creators effaced for them a spiritual and emotional dimension. But, as a 1940's Listener reviewer, Oliver Duff concedes, 'most of us don't see it like that' (WHN, 142). On their terms however, our literary history took shape. What they did in their aggressive fashion, was to **invent** a New Zealand realism.

From the foregoing historical account of the Phoenix literary school's rise to power it is possible to outline the criteria these men were advocating for a national fiction. The mode they chose for its expression was an extreme form of social realism consonant with the Marxist leanings of the group. As Lawrence Jones describes it in Barbed Wire and Mirrors, it 'concentrates on the individual in relation to social forces rather than natural and psychological forces, and it implies a criticism of social and political systems. It tends to be

a literature of protest, not a literature of accommodation' (Jones, 23). Central to both the theory and practice of this social realism was, in Jones' words, 'the deflation of N.Z. myths of itself as a Pastoral Paradise... realism as the deconstruction of Utopia' (Jones, 11). The writing was so robbed of the traditional romantic elements that the very concept of 'story' was challenged. And, if Sargeson's writing is the model, it was a severance from practically every aspect of our European, literary and Christian heritage. Also, the assumption of these men that women could not write with authority on subjects other than the domestic scene, effectively relegated women's writing to the literary margins. It was an act of tyranny, an erection of gender barriers which virtually put New Zealand women and romance behind the purdah. Needless to say, it established a male realist tradition and the terse masculine dialect as the dominant discourse of New Zealand fiction. Changes to the modes, deposing romanticism and altering the character and function of the short story, however, did not occur until the late 1930's. However, there were many styles and modes of fiction writing other than those of the Caxton set which could have become 'national'.

If we are looking for a national story-telling mode, I agree that we need something innovative and the creation must be an art form, but the term 'national' embodies what is common to the whole nation - men and women, descent,

language, history and a common culture. The concept of 'nation' is a political ideal: it has behind it a sense of pride, of unity and combined effort. The doctrines of the Phoenix/Tomorrow school seem to me to be an inversion of this generally accepted understanding of the term.

The new creed constituted a literary revolt and, what is more, a revolt against good taste. Yet it came to be recognized as 'national'. Its most committed practitioners were the poets, Curnow, Mason, Fairburn and Glover, and the fiction writers, John Mulgan and Frank Sargeson. Without the powerful influence of this Phoenix/Caxton set, the New Zealand short story could have evolved very differently, given the conditions and scope of current writing.

Influence of War on N.Z. Literature

World War I had an enormously sobering effect on the country. Its effect on the literature became apparent somewhat later, between the 1920's and 1930's. Families had lost loved ones, those who had been at the war had experienced its brutality and horror, and many returned maimed. A significant absence of war stories in these first New Zealand anthologies then is not surprising. These were the stories that were not being told. (One possible

exception is Alice Webb's 'The Patriot', in the Davin collection. It concentrates on the decision of a small landholder to leave his farm in the hands of his work-mate and to volunteer for active service - which is not, strictly speaking, a 'war' story.) Even in journals such as Quick March, where its non-fiction deals with war-time incidents and soldiers' experiences, its fictional contributions tended to side-step war themes. The regular appearance of Will Lawson's popular 'Rosebud' tales of the affairs of smalltown life and Claude Jewell's anecdotal bush yarns is evidence of this (Quick March, 29, 10.2.1920; 51, 10.1.1920; 13, 10.2.1920). The monstrous events and tragedies of battle had caused a kind of postwar shock, putting an automatic silencer on war as a subject for short fiction for the time being. And clearly, the flamboyant romantic styles and modes of expression were no longer appropriate. In many ways the influence of the 1914-18 war added a further thrust to a shift which was evolving naturally, from the conventional romantically structured story to the starker form of literary realism. It was not, however, a spontaneous reaction and there is little evidence of this trend in Gillespie's 1930 anthology.

I use the Gillespie, Allen and Davin anthologies as the basis for my research for this thirty year period, primarily because these volumes include what was thought to be the best short fiction being written at the time, and more importantly

since this chapter surveys the development of realism and a national literature, because all the stories have been selected for their relation to New Zealand.

O. N. Gillespie was especially conscious of the disparateness of the contents of his anthology and the lack of a distinguishing ethos. He writes in the preface:

This little volume is the first collection ever made of short stories by New Zealanders. It treats of an extraordinary variety of subjects, and is permeated throughout with a quiet humour; but to many, it may prove disappointing because the stories, particularly by contrast with those from Australia, lack any national outlook or distinctive atmosphere (ONG, v).

When Gillespie's anthology was published, no distinctive mode had been advocated and no criteria set to install a national form of fiction. And since his selection has been largely culled from the major Australian and New Zealand magazines of the day, tales of adventure and mystery prevail with a strong element of fantasy, though this latter could be the result of Gillespie's personal preference when compiling the volume.

The majority of writers in the 1920's still favoured an entertaining, sometimes quirky, approach to story telling.

In other words, there was a predilection to write about **events** rather than **conditions**, to focus on what happens, not on what a place or society or person is like. It signified a narrative impulse rather than a documentary impulse. The way these forms differ is analogous to the contrast between the romantic and realistic modes. The one follows a line of action, the other is predominantly descriptive and is virtually static: one gives form to the romantic tale or yarn while the other constitutes the 'objective' realism of the sketch.

The proposition I intend to argue here is that in the romantic tradition the intrinsic desire or wish-fulfilment in a story is overt and generally functions as the plot. Romantic fiction indulges our fantasies, invites us to identify with the hero or heroine and to share in the fulfilment and satisfaction of his or her quest for some desired object, whereas realism attempts to create the illusion of reality and for some reason, has a tendency to focus on life's more morbid or sordid details, usually the undesirable effects of experience. And, as I hope I validated earlier, the human desire which hovers about the creation of such a story is repressed, generally requiring a psychological or psycho-analytical interpretation of the diction to decode the submerged desires that motivated its conception.

Most stories published in the Gillespie collection are narrated in the romantic mode with language and subject matter intended to captivate the imagination. Ngaio Marsh's story, 'The Figure Quoted', is a case in point. It affirms the romance conventions in its nostalgic dimension and in the fulfilment of desire as an anticipated or natural outcome. Thus, Marsh details for effect first the dingy clutter of second-hand lots about to be auctioned, then has the narrator's roving eye rest eventually on a classical marble basin. Marsh's description of the sculpture evokes a calculated aesthetic response:

Its shape was perfect. The pure Greek outline of a shallow vessel with outward-curving, generous base and exquisitely-tilted lip. Beneath the rim was a band of fruit and leaves enclosed between two garlands that a Doric shepherd might have woven one day in spring. Inside the rim was a little flattened platform where once upon a time a stone nymph must have sat, dabbling her feet in the water and looking down slantways at the faun who still crouched on the pedestal. But the nymph had gone (ONG, 210).

As the auctioneer announces the first offer for the fountain, some movement and jostling at the head of the stairs attracts his attention and a second bidder appears,

seated on the banister post in a shaft of sunlight "behind a screen of gold-dust", a beautiful pale girl with her chin cupped in her hand, looking down slantways at the faun so far below. And to the auctioneer's utter consternation, she was wearing nothing at all. Although it is unstated, we perceive that the auctioneer's 'vision' is distorted by his imagination and his emotional response to the scene: 'Her appearance acted upon Mr. Batey exactly like a severe concussion following a blow on the head'. Furthermore, he 'sees' her nod repeatedly so that her bids run the first buyer up to an incredible forty pounds before the gentleman bidder suddenly asks to look at this separate 'piece' on the banister post and, convinced of its authenticity, requests that it be 're-enthroned'. Then 'before Mr. Batey's galvanised eyes they toppled her over, bore her down the stairs and set her up inside the stone basin. There she sat, lost behind an age of antiquity, sun-warmed but quite, quite still.' (ONG, 217).

The story bears the Romantic Keatsian quality of the poet's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', celebrating the unity and harmony of marble sculptures which represent original models from an imagined ideal past. In parallel fashion, the 'animated' nymph in Ngaio Marsh's story seeks the symbolic reunion with her faun in a timeless pastoral utopia. In its climax in a particular effect, the aesthetic sense of wholeness when the figures are re-coupled to complete the

artistic unit, the story corresponds to the lyric poem. The story also communicates the very human thrill of acquisition, the trader's 'orgasm' associated with the ingenuity of acquiring cheaply, because its value is unrecognized, a precious antique collector's item and selling it at an unimagined profit.

Despite the magical quality, Marsh's narrative is ultimately plausible. It needs little linguistic delving or analytical deduction to release hidden meaning. The dominance of the romantic mode brings to the reading experience a consciousness of the fictionality of the work. We recognise the correspondences between the actual world and the fictional world yet the work is not so firmly anchored in the truth criteria as to inhibit the imagination. But neither world, in Marsh's fiction, however well controlled, authenticates a feeling of familiar locale or any sense of historical or geographical nationalism.

Many stories in the anthology rely on the supernatural for their entertainment value, though none so well as 'The Figure Quoted'. Most simply perpetuate the outdated patterns of English prose fiction. Esther Glenn's tale, 'The Ghost that Set', for example, is all told in its title; 'The Happiest Dog in the North Island' by S. H. Jenkinson, is a fantastic piece of nonsense about a dog that controls an echo, and so terrible is the resounding cacophony of its bark

that everyone in the vicinity of that valley lives in terror of the dog being moved or dying before it has performed its particular bark to stop the echo. Pat Lawlor, who writes the tall tale, 'The Nag Nincompoop', symbolizes a punter's dream in the creation of a mechanical race horse which is so skilfully constructed as to look perfectly real but whose 'mechanism' could outstrip any animal on the course. Performing breathtaking speeds in trial runs, the predictable malfunction of its works finally exposes the tricksters who have entered it in the big race.

That these story-tellers have used their imaginations to create these preposterous yarns is conceded, but this does not mean that they induced a reciprocal process in the reader's imagination. It is entertainment, pure and simple. For these writers there is no ambition beyond a story well told, no concern to connect their writing to the land or the society in which they lived. They were romancing, and so in most cases their motivating desires are more easily discernible to the reader than those of the realist writers. Lydia Wevers has pointed out in the short story section of the Oxford History of New Zealand Literature that 'ghost stories suggest the containment of the unfamiliar within a deeply familiar cultural context' (OHNZL, 206), and what she says reinforces for me the desire in human nature to have absolute control of all aspects of our lives, and since the supernatural is beyond our control, we attempt to 'contain'

it in various ways. To preserve this sense of control, we create cultural myths and we empower ourselves by reading these types of neatly plotted, well ordered, happily ending stories or romances.

Every style and individual perception of New Zealand was different, yet in spite of Gillespie's prefatory concern at the 'lack (of) any national outlook or distinctive atmosphere', some characteristics identifying the New Zealander and the landscape **were** beginning to surface in the short fiction. In most of these stories, however, the English conventions of story-telling are still present, merely with minor concessions to setting and local colour. What was significant in this more 'New Zealand-conscious' narration was a sense of levity rather than a serious treatment of topic. The 'local colour' was usually a light-hearted representation of surface details and comic characters: it did not normally penetrate to universal human characteristics and problems in the way that the 'proper' short stories of Chekhov and de Maupassant did, disclosing profound insights to the reader in 'a moment of truth'.

John A. Lee's lightweight 'Shiner' stories belong to this category. They are the humorous anecdotes of a sundowner, a rogue with a notorious disinclination for work but a fanatical drive to obtain free 'the gradual lubrication and easement of malt and hops' as portrayed in 'Man's

Inhumanity to Man' in the Davin collection.

The best example of local colour writing in Gillespie's anthology is Arthur Adams' tale, 'The Last of the Moas', a great campfire yarn about two New Zealand stockmen who set about 'initiating' a new chum from England by organizing a moa hunt, but the plan backfires as the new arrival, nicknamed 'Clarence', ex Oxford, is every bit as capable in the bush as the New Zealanders. The 'Kiwi' mates mock up some moa tracks in the mud and attempt to make a moa call to impress Clarence, but to the horror of the deceivers the call is 'answered' and a live moa rushes from the bush, attacking their tent and putting all their lives in peril.

Frequently fantastic or romantic in content, the tale was always realistic in tone. Adams sketches the stereotypical New Zealand male, mateship and the back-blocks atmosphere with a sure touch and an authenticity which marks the loosening of European ties and the impulse to create a national realism. But it was impossible to expel the romantic essence from the short story. 'The Last of the Moas' retains its romance in an enchantment of things which are remote or dead or legendary, in its wish-fulfilment suggested in the aspirations of the 'great male hunter' discovering the existence of the gigantic flightless bird thought to be extinct for thousands of years. Further, Adams's work registers the beginning of a literary shift from the Victorian oriented urban story

towards New Zealand **rural** fictional settings. Adams is a writer at the crossroads of the change, being pulled on the one hand towards the romantic tradition of adventure stories and the unreal, and on the other towards an historic and growing comic representation of the New Zealand outback as an expression of local identity.

Still, in following the development of realism in New Zealand fiction, it is important to note the distinguishing characteristics which realist writers believed would counteract the romantic effects of the expression. For example, in Adams's 'Moas' we can see the origins of the informal, 'unliterary' discourse that would later represent the 'Kiwi bloke'. The ironic bantering tone contributes to this effect:

So Clarence was a dear delight to us all. He thought highly of his moustache - an upturned yellow thing....

In time he learnt sense. Most Englishmen who come out here do; that is the hopeful thing about our empire. But though the knowledge chastened Clarence, it takes time to make a man of a new chum, and possibly Bill Blake - he was a mate of mine - thought it would be well to hustle developments along (ONG, 13).

The story is also worth commenting upon from a national point of view because of the way the group politics operate in the tale. Adams's narrator registers the criticism of, and prejudice against the British which sprang up after the First World War, and the 'Kiwi' assumption that they were effete. In an historical sense the story exemplifies the New Zealander's strong rejection of class values which seems to be what lies at the base of their dislike of the British. This urge to be 'just your average bloke' distinguished the New Zealander from other nations (with perhaps the exception of Australia) and it demonstrates a conscious desire, especially of those New Zealand born, to be what was later termed 'non-U' (Ross, 42), to throw off the affectation and manners of the English upper class and, one surmises, to appear more **real** in doing so. Adams reveals in the Kiwis' teasing of the outsider, one who does not measure up to the New Zealand self image, the immigrant (ironically from the Homeland) who does not belong until he has proved his manhood in physical endurance and has displayed, into the bargain, a proper adaptability and **ordinariness**.

This fetish for mediocrity and the commonplace, which was one of the distinguishing elements of New Zealand realism, had apparently been about for quite some time, for William Pember Reeves commented on it as early as 1898 in The Long White Cloud, Ao Tea Roa. He noted that

'(t)he conventional became a tyranny: bright people tried humbly to seem dull. The last legislator known to have made a good joke died quietly in Wellington in 1897. New Zealanders appeared to distrust distinction, dislike brilliancy, and doubt originality. Their idol in those years was honest, wholesome Mediocrity - that which sees clearly but not far, and walks steadily because it never looks aloft' (Reeves, 537).

Recognising this peculiar cultural ethos, Adams reflects it in his fictional situation:

We were glad when Clarence arrived. He had come straight out from England with a letter of introduction to the boss, "to learn colonial experience." The boss was politely asked to take Clarence in hand and "break him in."

This the boss did with joyous punctiliousness. We were short of hands just then; the mustering was beginning, and it promised to be a busy fortnight. And for that fortnight Clarence, soft with his eight weeks' travel, first saloon, had a busy colonial time. From the few diffident remarks he found time to make, it appeared that he had never done any sort of work before, and rather

enjoyed the change. He had come straight from a place in England called Oxford, where so many of the colonial "dead-beats" hail from.

He could ride, too, which was a new thing to find in a new chum. He told us he had been taught how to in a school. It seemed to us a funny way to learn; riding, as anybody knows, is a thing that comes to you naturally (ONG, 12-13).

Though his writing is inspired by the narrative impulse, Adams begins to document in his prose those distinctive nuances of attitude that came to be accepted as national characteristics of the New Zealand culture in literature. He was expressing too, with a degree of realism, that peculiarly perverse cultural pride in being, as Adams's narrator puts it, 'on the extreme borders of civilization' (ONG, 13) (Footnote 1). It is however, as W. H. New noted, to the more static documentary form of the sketch rather than the local humorous anecdote or romantic tale that we look for the early signs of the indigenous short story (WHN, 21).

Gillespie includes a work by G. B. Lancaster in his anthology, 'In the Down-Country', a story from her own collection, Sons o' Men. Reading Lancaster's work gives me the impression that it was her ambition to be the one to write 'the indigenous short story'. Her appropriation

of a male 'voice', the assumed rugged frontier experience and her use of a form of realism are all devices that she exploited in an all-out effort to achieve her goal. She draws a stark picture of the hardship of a young wife from the city trying to survive the rigours of back-country life. But Lancaster was brought up in the romantic tradition and, try as she might, she could not dislocate her writing entirely from those basic conventions, the 'plotty', overt love themes and the formal resolution of romance fiction. Thus, her story portrays the dainty heroine stressed to breaking point by her husband's demands and neglect, begging his station-partner to take her away from it all. But, honouring the code of mateship, he advises her to stay and make a go of it, and here the narrative viewpoint shifts so that we follow him away with his heartache and anxiety for her.

Paradoxically, when next we see Liza a season later, she is on good terms with her husband, happy and coping - with a new baby son. In content, Lancaster presents a realistic portrayal of local experience, of a couple struggling for a living on one of the leased Government blocks, but it also has psychological and romantic underpinnings. As in her 'Story of Wi', her portrayal of the foibles of human nature is perceptive enough, but her attempts at reproducing a colloquial speech and dialects in a pseudo-male style incongruously interspersed with florid prose, expose her as an impostor. She cannot help

but lose credibility when she writes:

"Now we'll wade in at the fencin', for I must hev the stockin' done wi' by next month. S'elp me bob, but it's fair rotten to hev to take the inside o' a week gitting spliced."

It was into the golden land of love and desire that he brought Liza home through the sunsetting. For the scarped ranges and the marshes were passed, and all the world lay forward in a broad flooded yellow on tussock slopes and plumes of waving snow-grass. The little squat whare shared in the benediction, and a skylark sent them welcome down from God's gate (ONG, 166.)

Not surprisingly, her prose style was the target of many critics. 'The Sage', who wrote literary criticisms for The New Zealand Illustrated Magazine, gives qualified praise of G. B. Lancaster's Sons o' Men. It is, he comments

one of the best collections of Southern New Zealand stories yet written, and bears promise of even better work in the future. A little toning down of the style adopted would perhaps be an improvement (NZIM, 232-3, Dec.1904).

And, in an article on New Zealand nationalism in Quick March in 1902, C. Godfrey Turner writes:

As to writers, I have not so much to say. Only two jump to mind as being well known. Mr. Marriot Watson and the unspeakable G. B. Lancaster

(Turner, 35, QM 11 April 1921).

For all her effusion, Lancaster was a remarkable woman, striving 'manfully' to succeed in a sphere she clearly regarded as being a male preserve. Besides, aligning herself in this way with a male culture reveals her perception of what she considered even then was innovative, marketable, national short fiction.

Three other writers represented in this first anthology who, it seems to me, display national qualities in their work are Iris Wilkinson (Robin Hyde), Blanche Baughan and Katherine Mansfield ('The Voyage'). The work of Mansfield will be the subject of later discussion.

Robin Hyde in 'A Ceiling of Amber', manages to combine in almost equal proportion romance and realism by juxtaposing the poetic, and in parts, a blunt journalistic reportage of things which it would perhaps be more tactful not to recount. Yet with the searing honesty which is a trademark, Hyde habitually lays bare the unpalatable truth. A short passage from the story illustrates her

inclination to write a fiction based in fact, a literary genre that Heather Roberts affirms in her review of 'Passport to Hell', is better known now as 'faction' (Roberts, 68, 25.4.87):

Geoff Dawlish was his second-in-command, picked up, for want of a better man, from the Maori village. He had been a seaman once, on a little blue boat engaged in the trade of dried Maori heads which, for a time, established almost a fashion in Sydney. The ship was wrecked. Some of the crew were disposed of by natives in the customary manner. Geoff Dawlish was not (ONG, 264).

Robin Hyde was at pains to establish a more serious approach to fiction writing, and yet it was this kind of journalistic realism that Frank Sargeson parodied in his crude satire on Hyde written for Tomorrow in 1938 entitled 'Ticket to Heaven or Cling to your Cheque' as part of his 'New Zealand Anthology' series (Jan 5, 1938). Hyde's intention in this and similar passages in, I imagine, a bid for equality, was to produce an arresting or 'shocking' authenticity, but in fact Sargeson had a point. In context, its melodramatic quality arouses a certain unease which does generate a faint mistrust of Hyde's sincerity.

Still, like a chapter of New Zealand history (and so like sections of Ian Wedde's Symmes Hole), Hyde's narrative imparts the trauma of early settlement. It tells of one man's agitation for the placement and manning of a lighthouse on the rocks off a dangerous North Island coastline and of the lifestyle and customs of the beach Maori who are Peter Verne's only social contacts on the mainland. Hyde's background knowledge of a concoction made with tutu berries and the notorious mischief of the tohunga add local spice to the documentary exposition. But she heightens the narrative with fictitious embellishments creating what could almost be called a new genre - the short historical romance. Because of the serious quality of her writing however, the emotional dimension is more the revelation of a moral dilemma than an unfolding love story. Verne becomes drugged one evening with the poisonous tutu wine and is rendered incapable of rowing out to the lighthouse, so the young Maori girl, whom he realises too late that he loves, rows across in the holed boat to light the lamp, but she does not survive the return journey.

Read now, the narrative's effect is unsatisfactory, distorted for us by a more indulgent use of emotive language and sentimentalism than is acceptable today. At the end, for instance, Hyde writes:

Even when the dawn walked delicately, with flushed feet, along the pavement of pearl and a pale sun showed him there was no boat in all that space of waters, he waited (ONG, 273).

It is difficult to discover in Hyde's metaphors an unconscious conceptual process, since they have been so deliberately and rationally made to function as practical rhetorical devices. The palely illuminated seascape is designed to induce a pensive mood, while the 'pale sun' and 'pavement of pearl' imaginatively impart a celestial ambience to the scene and a sense of the girl as angel/martyr now, travelling the pathway to heaven. Thus, it seems as if Hyde's rhetoric merely belongs to the basic extension of meaning or logic of the text, but Gunnar Backman argues that '...our personal habits of expression form personal metaphoric concepts which are not randomly designed but in accordance with our personalities and congruous with our view of the world' (Backman, 41). If this hypothesis is true, we are likely to gain some insight into the mind and intentions of the writer by examining the metaphoric concepts that helped structure the work. In 'A Ceiling of Amber', Hyde expresses emotion by means of light. The metaphor of shining light is connected with the lighthouse keeper Verne's sacrifice of comfort and happiness, and with the function of the lighthouse guiding shipping and illuminating the dark

seas. The dawn light is associated with the young woman's sacrificial death metaphorically implied at the end of the story. It may be then, that Hyde's personal choice of metaphors was an early warning of a perspective on life which was affected by or attracted to the heroic act of suicidal martyrdom.

Sentimentality aside however, the type of story that Robin Hyde was writing was serious fiction, soundly based in historic nationhood yet not repressing the emotional dimension; and if it had not been for the biased literary power of the Caxton set, the New Zealand short story may well have developed along these lines.

Blanche Baughan too reveals a facet of early New Zealand life in an exploration of the emotions and nostalgia of the foreign immigrant for the things of his homeland. In 'Cafe au Lait' it is the delicious Swiss coffee that old Philippe craves most. Baughan portrays without sentimentalism, the perennial dichotomy of Home and home for the foreign settler and the problem of where his loyalties lie. When Nanette, a woman recently arrived from Philippe's own Swiss canton, can assure him that the place is not the same as he remembers it, that now there is a railway station where once was Fleury's pasture, that all the things he is homesick for are either changed or gone, he almost faints away. The woman revives him with a

bowl of the local fresh milk. The new beginning that Philippe subsequently plans demonstrates finally an acceptance of his adopted home, and with Nanette as his housekeeper he can now have prepared here the cafe au lait that he has missed so much. Real Swiss coffee mixed with New Zealand milk is the delectation which helps alleviate the old man's homesickness. In Baughan's design, the blended components of the coffee become the symbol for the harmonious integration of cultures.

Though romantic in form and content the narrative has national qualities. Women writers have shown an instinctive propensity for bringing an emotional dimension to New Zealand fiction which Baughan exemplifies here. However, we have become conditioned to think of national literature as structured predominantly in the realist tradition and to discount works which deal with the emotional concerns of the people as somehow not real. The point is that in 'Cafe au Lait', Baughan has achieved an authentic yet romantically expressed nationalism. Her methods and insights make claims on the reader, encouraging sensitivity to others' needs as well as an open-mindedness to the notion that all is **not** concrete and that our country can be enriched by sensibility and by other cultures.

I will not be discussing in anything like this detail

the anthologies of C. R. Allen and Dan Davin as this would be to cover old ground merely to find similar patterns conveyed in similar stories.

A brief summary of the short fictions collected by Allen appears in a review in the New Zealand News, 26th April, 1938:

'The Story of Wi', by G. B. Lancaster; 'Within Sight of Kapiti', by W. A. von Keisenberg; 'The Little Bridge', by Robin Hyde; 'Te Ahia', by Arnold Cork; 'The Bird of Rameka', by Constance Player Green and 'The Slave's Reward', by Will Lawson, are Maori studies. Eileen Duggan brings imaginative insight to a story of Edward Gibbon Wakefield in 'Rain From Heaven'. Nelle Scanlan makes the glories of the Milford track the setting of 'The Holiday'. Hector Bolitho recalls the New Zealand Christmas of his boyhood and J. A. Lee is humorous about a pillar of the Labour Movement whose perfidy had to be concealed for the Movement's sake.

This is emphatically a book worth reading and one that can be given to friends likely to be interested in the New Zealand setting which is their common bond (26.4.38).

But it seems to me that Allen has made a serious error of judgement in not including a work by Katherine Mansfield. Sir Hugh Walpole, writing his 'more than kindly foreword' to this volume (a phrase borrowed from The Times Literary Supplement's review of the anthology, 4.6.38) in fact defends the omission:

There is no story in this volume that approaches the art of Katharine (sic) Mansfield, and yet I have from it a more actual sense of New Zealand than ever she gave me. Katharine Mansfield always seemed to be too clearly derivative, she had read too much Tchekov, and she was so desperately anxious to be a fine artist that I have always felt a little shyness about her. These writers here are not seeking to be artists. I do not mean that they give no thought to the art of the short story. It is clear that most of them have thought about that a good deal. They surrender this frequently to the bad powers, to melodrama, the cliché, sentimentality, and so on, but, because of their honesty, the country comes through (CRA, vi).

In the Davin collection too, the stories written before 1945 are generally undemanding. (Exceptions are works by Mansfield and Sargeson). The anthologised stories show again and again the co-existent traditions in the New Zealand short fiction of the time, the escapist

romantic impulse together with a realistic representation of locale and character, set within a framework of entertainment.

In 'An Active Family', for example, Blanche Baughan describes the scrimping and the struggle of colonial families on the land but in this her reality is rose-coloured. The girls making apple pies from windfalls collected in the orchard and butter from the dairy herd are not marred or oppressed by excessive hours of hard work: they retain the picturesque 'snowy aprons' and wholesome rosy-cheeked appeal of Hardy's Wessex women. In the dairy where 'the very air seems clean and coloured', Baughan's selected details set a Romantic pastoral scene in which hand-churned butter, 'washed with cold, clear spring water...lies upon the dark wood table, a mellow, shining mass' (DD, 183) and when weighed and 'shaped with deft and willing hands', it will be spread on the proverbial newly-baked 'brown bread from a colonial oven'.

Frank S. Anthony exploded this pastoral paradise myth with his Me and Gus stories by highlighting distinctly unromantic aspects of farming. In a sketch from the Me and Gus collection called 'Wood-Splitting with Gus', Mark is obliged to wear a hat and handkerchief tied round his neck as protection from the spatter of tobacco juice haphazardly distributed by old Harry expectorating as he

works the saw. In 'Winter Feeding the Herd', Mark's bachelor living quarters are shown to be the antithesis of the aesthetic appeal of Baughan's freshly scrubbed family home. Anthony focusses on the unhygienic with comic effect:

While we were discussing the plan, Gus got his eye rivetted on a mouse that was balancing itself on the rim of my milk jug, trying to reach for a drink. He said he never came over to my place but what he saw something revolting.

I don't see any reason to be so superior over a little thing like that. As I showed him, the milk was too low down for the mouse to reach, and anyhow I often caught the little beggars like that. Gus said even if they couldn't reach down they left their feet marks on the rim, but what does that matter - a man can always pour the milk out of the side that hasn't any feet marks (DD, 214).

Where colonial stories normally focussed on difficult, yet nonetheless successful, farming accomplishments promoting the concept of 'man in control of the land', Anthony's satires feature the disasters that the inadequacies of two inexperienced men starting out farming in Taranaki can bring upon themselves. However, despite their gross mismanagement, the tough core of

masculinity and the 'unpolished' character which became so fundamental to New Zealand fiction, remain central to these stories.

I have discussed above the literary modes and intentions of the now narrowed field of writers who were selected to be the short fiction contributors to the first New Zealand anthologies. The point that I have been attempting to make is that quite a number of narrators developed the realistic frontier aspect of New Zealand life which glorified the masculine pioneer image, the 'tough fibre' and mateship. The work of these writers also records that appropriation of uncouthness which had gathered momentum in social reactions to war experiences, and it is apt in a way to immortalise in fiction the pioneer heroes who originally tamed this country. Outside influences contributed to this type of fiction too. There was a shift in public taste towards a more realistic story and a general literary drift from urban to rural fiction abroad which coincided with the colonisation of New Zealand. This shift is clearly evident in the development of the American short story, in the movement away from the stylised characterisation and the tendency towards allegory that Poe, Hawthorne and Melville preferred, to the type of homorous realism in which Mark Twain and Bret Harte excelled (Reid, 26). The other contingent of New Zealand writers, many of them women, expressed an

emotional response to events and conditions in New Zealand. The former type of fiction tends to be more oriented towards literary realism; the latter exploited more the romantic mode. And, as I hope I have shown, both types convey different yet valid representations of New Zealand life.

At this point, I want to spotlight two writers, Katherine Mansfield and Frank Sargeson, whose contributions were crucial to the development of the short story in New Zealand, then to gather up the threads of my argument, and with the evidence from the anthologies, finally return to my original point, the influence of the Caxton set which I raised at the beginning of the chapter.

Davin, being a writer of the forties, was clearly alert to the significance of Mansfield and Sargeson, for he gave Mansfield due recognition with three stories, 'At the Bay', 'The Voyage' and 'Her First Ball', in his collection of thirty-three. And from Sargeson who helped Davin with the selections, he includes two, 'Last Adventure' and 'The Making of a New Zealander'. The work of these two authors marks the change in the short story **genre** - from the tale to the short story 'proper', that is, from story-telling to the creation of an art form, and from entertainment to intellectual challenge. What distinguishes Mansfield and Sargeson is not only their application of the new form which reshaped the short story

but that their writing now functioned by **implication** and showed for the first time the **conditions** of the social context.

The new short story, evolving out of the sketch, was moulded by literary realism: it rejected traditional romantic formalities - the structured plot, narrative closure and happy endings. Its practitioners are not interested in the exotic, adventure and the high points of life; their purpose is to inscribe the everyday. Even so, as I see it, they cannot dispense with the 'romantic' altogether. Romance in the changed genre merely discovers a new expression. As Lilian Furst notes after studying the German Romantic critics, 'the romantic is not only a **type** but also an **element** of poetry...and in this sense all creative writing is to some extent romantic' (Furst, 7; my emphasis). Romance now becomes incorporated in the elisions of the prose and in metaphor, allegory and linguistic suggestion, that is, in an evocation of emotional matter generated by the reader's imagination.

Mansfield's story, 'The Voyage', illustrates precisely this mode of writing. 'The Voyage' describes a ferry crossing at night from Wellington to Picton from a child's point of view. Fenella's mother has died and she is travelling across the Strait with her grandmother who has entrusted the safekeeping of her umbrella with the

swan's head handle to the little girl. The swan, connected by legend with death, functions as a kind of motif and mission which runs through the work. Although initially the beak of the swan umbrella 'pecks' at Fenella's shoulder as she clasps it to her, she accepts the challenge, accomplishes her task and on arrival, hangs the precious thing up on the rail of her grandparent's bed. Relatively plotless in form, the story is a description of Fenella's impressions of the voyage. However, the romantic aspect of Mansfield's writing lies in its allegorical significance, expressing the inward by the outward, the abstract by the concrete. The representational image is orientated to outer reality - in this case the precise, concrete details of the parting with a parent at the wharf, the sensation of being adrift as the ropes tying the ship to the shore are violently hurled off, and the actual crossing - while the symbolic dimension is constructed by inner sources, by the modifying and transpositional power of our creative imaginations. In an art intrinsically romantic, the suggestions from Mansfield's physical details, produce emotional and psychological images evoking the human separation process and the passage of shock and anxiety that the child undergoes when a parent dies.

For example, Mansfield conveys in the story's opening imagery the feeling of trepidation and the fear of what

lies beyond that Fenella is experiencing which relates on the one hand, to her immediate apprehension about the voyage but which is associated more profoundly with her emotional vulnerability:

It was dark on the Old Wharf, very dark; the wool sheds, the cattle trucks, the cranes standing up so high, the little squat railway engine, all seemed carved out of solid darkness. Here and there on a rounded wood-pile, that was like the stalk of a huge black mushroom, there hung a lantern, but it seemed afraid to unfurl its timid, quivering light in all that blackness; it burned softly, as if for itself (DD, 157).

Midway between the islands they experience a 'rough patch' which is also allegorical in its significance. The stewardess enters Fenella and grandma's cabin to tell them:

"We're just entering the Straits", she said...

"It's a fine night, but we're rather empty. We may pitch a little" (DD, 164).

Then as they approach Picton the mists are lifting and the darkness lightens towards the dawn:

...the cold pale sky was the same colour as the cold pale sea. On the land a white mist rose and fell. Now they could see quite plainly dark bush. Even the shapes of the umbrella ferns showed, and those strange silvery withered trees that are like skeletons (DD, 166).

Romantic origins are strong in this allegorical setting. Mansfield describes what looks to the observer like a petrified primeval landscape. The partially obscured scene beneath the shifting mists can manifest itself in the imagination either as something sinister or as something appealing depending upon what the observer is unconsciously desiring or dreading at the time. And since Fenella is apprehensive about her 'destination', we can safely deduce here that Fenella is in a state of morbid anxiety regarding her mother and afraid of what is destined to happen to her for **she** sees death images in the scene in 'those strange silvery withered trees that are like skeletons'.

More abstractly however, 'The Voyage' seems to reveal a child's negotiation of the effects of shock in which one could either sink or survive, succumb to its terrors or contend successfully with them. If grandma's sombre text over the bed symbolizes her primness, grandfather presents a different prospect as well as a benevolent empathy for

the child's predicament, for 'he ruffled his white tuft and looked at Fenella so merrily she almost thought he winked at her' (DD, 168). Probing the prose then for psychological clues, it is quite significant that the story's final sentence shows Fenella reaching the haven of her grandfather's cheerful normality which we gather is a blessing for the bereaved child. Metaphorically it provides for us the affirming impression that the little girl has made the transition successfully and formed a new attachment that will be, in terms of the voyage, her 'life-raft', sustaining her through the rough passage of her anxiety and feared abandonment. So, although the story may be plotless from a purely narrative point of view, there is an underlying emotional progression (or voyage) for Fenella, from the mental trepidation at the beginning to the final 'deliverance' from trauma when she has crossed the strait.

Sargeson's meanings too rely on the effects of language, and as much on what is left unsaid as on what is said. In his attempt to capture the local reality, Sargeson has also tried to find an appropriate language to deal with the material of New Zealand life, writing with the voices of his characters in mind, each with its own rhythm and cadence (AFS, 223-4). As E. A. Horsman says of the method: 'Anyone may have certain ideas say about New Zealand life, but to embody them like this, and in what

seems the inevitable form for the purpose, is rare' (Horsman, 130).

Sargeson however, was not the originator of the masculine, local idiom narrator. His New Zealand precursors were Arthur Adams, writing at the turn of the century and Frank Anthony with his Me and Gus anecdotes, and Sargeson seems to have picked up where Anthony left off. In his 'local idiom' era, Sargeson shows his indebtedness also to Sherwood Anderson, for the short suggestive sentence and the repetition and pace on which he modelled his own style to create a similar 'realistic' story. In a tribute to Anderson, Sargeson wrote in an article published in his Conversation in a Train:

What fascinates him about words is their enormous suggestive power and he uses them to liberate the imagination, certainly not, as some writers do, to restrict and pin it down. The defect of the method is that page by page you get the impression that you are about to receive a new revelation of life, a revelation which never quite turns up. You may feel a little disappointed at the end, and conclude that there is a lot to be said for the restrictive qualities of words after all (CiT, 15).

It is an advantage therefore to bear this in mind when

reading a Sargeson story.

In 'The Making of a New Zealander' for example, we are being asked to question the term 'New Zealander', to regard with sympathy and without discrimination the plight of Nick, the Dalmatian immigrant, to do in fact what Blanche Baughan exhorted us to do in 'Cafe au Lait'. However, as already hinted, reaching Sargeson's meaning is a demanding task, primarily because his inarticulate narrator is restricted to few and simple words to recount the story and his speech is non-intellectual local dialect consisting almost entirely of Anglo Saxon words. It is devoid of the 'romantic' figures of speech such as metaphor and symbol; it has hardly any adjectives or adverbs, few similes, and altogether, the Sargesonian narrator has, as Lydia Wevers puts it, 'a limited ability to articulate his understanding of what he reports' (OHNZL, 228). To illustrate the point in 'The Making of a New Zealander', he begins:

The boss was all right, I didn't mind him at all and most days he'd just settle down by the fire and get busy with his crochet. It was real nice to see him looking happy and contented as he sat there with his ball of wool.

But this story is not about a cocky who used to sit in front of the fire and do crochet. I'm not saying I haven't got a story about him, but

I'll have to be getting round to it another time.

Yes, the boss was all right, it was his missis that was the trouble (DD, 254).

It looks simple, but once conventional contexts are subverted or questioned in this way, we discover how uncertain the boundaries of meaning become (OHNZL, 228-9). We are thus constantly obliged to use our imaginations to supply the absent discourse.

National identity has always been a crucial issue for Sargeson, but 'The Making of a New Zealander' seems more like an anti-national story considering its underpinning of social criticism. Sargeson questions national, cultural and gender identities and deliberately subverts the norms. Nick has cut his ties with Dalmatia to come out to New Zealand with his mate. Working hard on the land establishing apple orchards he hopes to (should be entitled to) become a New Zealander, yet in doing so he loses **all** national identity, cut off from the old and excluded from the new by his cultural and sexual identity 'differences'. Nor will there be the chance, as far as Nick is concerned, of a future generation with a claim to New Zealand nationality, for Nick emphatically will not marry, ostensibly because it is too expensive but we gather, because he is so fond of his mate. Ironically, Nick identifies Mrs. Crump as one who would feel

culturally at home in Dalmatia:

I will tell you about Mrs. Crump, Nick said.
 She should go to Dalmatia. In Dalmatia our
 women wear bags on their head just like her, and
 she would be happy there (DD, 259).

Just as ironic is the boss doing his crochet by the fire and, if we allow for the naive narrator's misconception of the boss being 'all right', we perceive that Mr. Crump is a fully-fledged New Zealander **without** making any real contribution to the country's development - unless we count the odd tea-cosy or two. Although Sargeson was challenging society with the Crumps' role reversal, we are still expected to infer that the only acceptable male contribution is a physical one. In Sargeson's stories, as in reality, things are not always 'normal' or as we expect them to be. In his blurring of identity boundaries, Sargeson demonstrates this. It is what Lydia Wevers terms 'the "realness" of uncertainty' (OHNZL, 229).

Sargeson's final adherence to realism in this story is to leave the narrative business unfinished. Whereas the romantic hero rises above adversity to resolve the narrative question and dutifully fulfils his responsibility to satisfy the reader's desire to know the outcome, Sargeson's narrator, the anti-hero, opts out,

gives up the struggle to understand the problem and retires to the pub, resorting to booze in characteristic fashion, to forget. In doing both this and in choosing to express himself in minimalist dialogue, Sargeson puts full responsibility for the denouement and ultimate meaning of the story on to the reader.

And in spite of his brutal brand of realism which exposes some unpalatable home truths, there derives an unexpected emotional response - the pity or sympathy for a disadvantaged human being or anguish at some sensed injustice of life. It seems to well up through gaps in the inarticulate narrator's dialogue, but in fact it is subtly elicited by Sargeson's rhetoric, the repetition of words or phrases which we presume occur as a result of the speaker's limited vocabulary, but which are functioning with a calculated, cumulative and penetrating power. The recurring guilt and pity, for example, that both reader and narrator feel for the woman in 'A Piece of Yellow Soap' is evoked in part through Sargeson's reiterated line at the beginning and end of the story, 'She is dead now, that woman...' (SFS, 12,13). In addition, the piece of common washing soap itself which the woman clings to and which the whole narration revolves around, acts as a strange kind of catalyst that provokes an emotive reaction. Thus, for all Sargeson's renown in establishing the male **realist** tradition in New Zealand short fiction,

his Spartan renderings hide a remarkable subterranean romanticism.

Paradoxically too, it is in this minimalist dialogue of Sargeson's, constructed to give the illusion of the laconic, New Zealand male, that we can observe examples of the repressed desire which, as Lacan points out, erupts into the subject's discourse in censored form.

'Sale Day' is a story which operates in a similar way to the psychological transposition method that Lacan describes. In this two-character dialogue, Victor's repressed emotions are displaced on to the tom-cat, and his anger and disgust at its 'randy' nature and behaviour are anger and disgust at himself. Victor flaunts his half-naked body, making repeated but vain attempts to kindle a reciprocal lust in Elsie while the gradually increasing heat of the fire in the coal range matches Victor's rising anger. His response each time Elsie beckons the cat is significant:

Puss, puss, Elsie said.

The stinking brute. Don't encourage him.

Pussy cat, Elsie said.

I don't like randy tom cats (SFS, 96).

Confirming our deductive hunch now, the relationship

between Victor and the cat is then made undeniably explicit:

I don't particularly like myself, Victor said. Any more than I like that cat (SFS, 96).

And if we still had any doubts, Sargeson further links them sexually with the word 'stroking':

They stood there, and Victor went on stroking his muscles. Elsie stroked the cat and it started to purr (SFS, 98).

When Victor finally hurls the cat into the fire, the physical violence acts as a temporary catharsis to his own rampant sexual desires. But Victor realises that without the cat there as surrogate, Elsie will be the victim when the others are away next sale day.

Look here, Elsie, he said, it's a fortnight to next sale day. If I was in your shoes I'd look around for another job (SFS, 98).

There is no thought of Victor's leaving. The psycho-linguistic analysis exposes a dominant and quite primitive strain of male chauvinism: women, like randy tom-cats, are expendable.

Using this method of interpretation the modern short story can be seen as a work shaped also by the reader or critic. It serves nevertheless to reveal further the presence of the underlying elements of romanticism in Sargeson's ostensibly realistic writing.

Probably the best example of Sargeson's 'romantic realism' is in 'The Hole That Jack Dug'. As critics of this story we are expected to assume the same interpretational role as the analyst in a psycho-analytical situation. If, as Lacan maintains, the unconscious is structured like a language, then connotations in the language equate with associations in the unconscious. A hole being a gap or space with something missing, represents an 'emptiness', and the actual 'hole' that Jack dug symbolizes this lack or repressed desire. Preparing a hole and then filling it in represents an unconscious **fulfilment** of that desire. In semantic terms the word 'fulfilment' then contains a Freudian pun. Psychologically, it is the unconscious need to be made whole and it works as the metaphor and purpose for the central action of the story. Sargeson's narrator leads us to the nature of what his desire **is** in a variety of ways. The selection of homo-erotic detail that Tom, the narrator, chooses to describe Jack reveals more about Tom than about Jack:

...Jack was in the hole with nothing on except his boots and his little tight pair of shorts. Jack is a big specimen of a bloke, he's very powerfully developed...And that afternoon he was sweating so much he had a shine on as well (SFS, 243).

The generic name 'Jack' designates the common man (as in Jack and Jill denoting man and woman, or as in every man-Jack) and Jack *in* the hole is clearly the object of Tom's repressed desire. Tom's partiality for men is reinforced in a comment about Jack's wife:

...Mrs. Parker is a mighty good-looking woman, so I suppose she's always naturally expected everybody of the male sex to be more interested in her than in her old man. Everybody is anyhow, except me. But still she's never seemed satisfied (SFS, 245-6).

Here, Sargeson has the unconscious and the language operating in tandem and we as analyst have been able to process what we have been told in a Lacanian interpretation to 'crack the subject's code' to discover the submerged desire which is buried in the banal discourse, and which presumably, the naive narrator/analysand is unable to comprehend.

Thus we are compelled to take a vital and active role in the interpretation of the serious fictions of both Mansfield and Sargeson, and in the process we become profoundly involved in cultural and gender questions and in the functioning of New Zealand life from different perspectives. Moreover, though they differ in outlook, in many ways Mansfield and Sargeson are very similar writers. Both have been nationally acclaimed for their convincing realism and authenticity: their writing has the capacity to allow emotion to be drawn out of realism, and both authors are innovators of the modern short story in New Zealand. Why then should one writer and one perspective be selected to represent the national short story? Why, that is, should Sargeson be privileged over Mansfield?

Needless to say, the Caxton group had the last word. A comment published by the Guardian and emblazoned on the front cover of Sargeson's autobiography emphasizes more of the type of bigotry that New Zealand literature was subject to:

If Katherine Mansfield first put New Zealand on the literary map...Frank Sargeson must rank as his country's first real cartographer.

The comment implies a perception of the woman's minor role, the man's more extensive contribution; it

accentuates the man's genuineness ('first real cartographer') as though Sargeson was somehow more convincing in his representation of New Zealand than Mansfield was.

To be fairminded, Sargeson was aware of his narrow focus. He observed too that Mansfield's outlook was contrary to his own but that it was also restricted. This opinion was expressed in an interview with Sargeson in 1970 recorded in Conversation in a Train:

When I came along a lot of people felt, I think... that because of a certain amount of power in these early sketches they seemed to relate so much to New Zealand. And that's right, **relate** - it wasn't New Zealand itself; it related. But people felt, 'Ah, this is the way you write.' So therefore, instead of opening up something for New Zealand, both Mansfield and myself have tended to be constricting influences. I mean who wants all of New Zealand life to be seen in terms of Mansfield or in terms of Sargeson? (OHNZL, 229).

Yet whether he was conscious of it or not, his writing was a reaction against hers.

All the same, the Guardian comment was an echo, a disturbingly late echo, of the Caxton arrogance - grudging

acknowledgement of a superb woman writer who in their eyes 'regrettably' could not rank as the Father of New Zealand short fiction because she was a woman. That honour was conferred upon Frank Sargeson and the reasons should now be apparent. Apart from the obvious good fortune of his being born a male, Sargeson felt it was important to press a working class society. His ostensibly non-elitist fiction with its proletarian 'voice' and heroes were expressly tailored to the Marxist beliefs of the Caxton set. As a left-wing group, it was part of their dogma to refute a class structure in New Zealand. They were hypocritical enough however, not to see that though Sargeson wrote a 'toil and soil' realism **about** the ordinary worker, he was clearly writing **for** a higher class of reader, namely the bourgeois intelligensia.

My reservations on the choice of 'laureate' include Sargeson's portrayal of the itinerant male working class culture as if it were the New Zealand 'norm' and his limitation of fictional time and place to the 'here and now'. Constrictions such as these produced the narrowed outlook which inhibited Sargeson's fiction in a way that I feel Mansfield's was not.

Mansfield writes openly of the class distinctions in New Zealand which were there. Her reality included the middle and working classes, a factor which widened the

fictional experience as well as her range of character types. While class distinction in her stories is not condoned, she refused to ignore its presence here. 'The Doll's House' illustrates her particular sensitivity to the subject. The Burnell children are not allowed to associate with the little Kelveys because their mother is a washerwoman but when Kezia shows them the doll's house, if ever so briefly, before Aunt Beryl sends them off in high dudgeon, 'our Else', the child portrayed as virtually mute, is so moved by what she has seen that she **speaks**, "I seen the little lamp," she said softly'. Her justly famous line touches a nerve so that we feel ashamed, disturbed by the injustice of the system and the depth of their deprivation.

Mansfield's stories, like those of her model, Chekhov, have a wider, more universal appeal. Her more liberal form of realism allows her to draw implicitly-romantic images from classical and Biblical sources which add a textural depth to her writing not present in Sargeson's. Mansfield's work expresses our New Zealand culture yet affirms our origins, our natural European traditions and heritage, whereas 'national' for Sargeson meant forgetting the past and finding a form which would accommodate a severance of all links and relations with Europe. Sargeson well knew from literary discussions with the Phoenix/Caxton group their strong views on this issue.

Fairburn as usual was adamant that New Zealand should cease to live on 'culture memory'. And in a letter to Mason he wrote, 'Because we really are people of a different race, (we) have no right to be monkeying about with European culture' (Sinclair, 244). Radicalism such as this was in a sense divorcing these people and their literature unrealistically from their heritage. I believe it is a defect which 'dates' Sargeson's writing while Mansfield's will endure, retaining its appeal for generations. Roger Horrocks, in an article in the journal, And, entitled 'The Invention of New Zealand', makes a relevant observation of The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse, that 'what strikes one readership historically as "reality" may well strike later readers quite differently' (Horrocks, 10-11).

The treatment of a morning scene from Mansfield's major work, 'At the Bay' and a morning scene from Sargeson's novella, 'That Summer', will serve to illustrate the contrast in their representations of reality.

At the beginning of 'At the Bay', Mansfield writes:

The sun was not yet risen, and the whole of Crescent Bay was hidden under a white sea mist. The big bush-covered hills at the back were

smothered. You could not see where they ended and the paddocks and bungalows began...there was nothing to mark which was beach and where was the sea. A heavy dew had fallen. The grass was blue. Big drops hung on the bushes and just did not fall; the silvery, fluffy toi-toi was limp on its long stalks, and all the marigolds and the pinks in the bunglaow gardens were bowed to the earth with wetness (TGP, 27).

Her description is at once realistic and romantic. Not only does it give a sense of immediacy, an impression of recall of the actual scene, but it is full of associations which create a sense of nostalgia and evoke the mysteries of the Creation with its visual imagery of landform emerging from the waters. Woven into the imagery of a new day dawning is the impression of a child waking into consciousness from the chaos of a dream world in which a fish appears 'flicking in at the window and gone again'. Christian symbolism and the darkness and light imagery merge, suggesting reparation, the passing of night and a new beginning when the shepherd and his flock of sheep appear on the road and head for the 'steeper, narrower rocky pass that lead(s) out of **Crescent** Bay and towards **Daylight** Cove' (TGP, 29, my emphasis).

The way Mansfield represents it, the landscape is

identifiably New Zealand yet is an integral part of our global and our spiritual conceptions. In this, Mansfield represents both our home and our heritage.

Conversely, in 'That Summer', Sargeson's narrator, Bill, says:

I felt a bit sorry and wished in a way I wasn't going, because the farm away back there in the valley looked sort of nice and peaceful with the sun just getting up on such a fine morning, and only a sheep calling out now and then, and the dogs barking because I hadn't let them off the chain when I started down the road. And I looked at the hills and thought what a hell of a good worker I was to have cut all the fern and scrub I had in the winter. But I thought no, I've got to be on the move (SFS, 146).

The Sargesonian view of the landscape is one-dimensional in its narrative perspective, seen merely in terms of Bill's controlling effect upon it. In other words, the crucial implication of the passage is of masculine physical power transforming the countryside. The passage illustrates on the one hand the limitations of Sargeson's prose style and on the other that unshared, unsharing concept of reality, the egocentric preoccupation of male

domination of the land.

Thus was our New Zealand identity invented. What was distressing was that once invented it 'caught on'. Just as Henry Lawson's Australian rough-diamond bush characters and swagmen became a national legend through literary representation, so did the form of 'realism' and the image of New Zealand that the Caxton men promoted. Possibly because of the cultural confusion which I identified in the short fiction of the colonial era, New Zealanders were by the thirties receptive to the notion, especially after World War One, of appropriating a national image for themselves, different from any other nation, and for some, one which would be distinctly different from the 'parent' culture. The Caxton set's timely literary rebellion provided an answer in the inarticulate, vehemently 'non-U', muscular, hard-drinking male. Like all reactionaries, their intention was to change society, and their literature was designed to counteract in the most pointed possible way the modes and moralistic aims of the previous generation. Sargeson epitomises the reaction in stories verging on the offensive such as 'I've Lost my Pal', 'A Pair of Socks' and 'Sale Day' which illustrate this flouting of the old proprieties. In 'Sale Day', for example, I have illustrated how our normally shrouded sexuality is there coarsely stripped of its traditional aura of mystery and romance. In short, Sargeson, with this downright brand of realism and his laconic male

protagonist, was attempting to present a deliberately anti-romantic view of New Zealand and New Zealanders.

Fiction in general can give us two types of information about a society: first, in a descriptive way, facts about the country, the people and the social structure. Second, more subtly, it can convey values and attitudes. We could as readily have adopted a Hyde or a Baughan or a Mansfield reality and called it national but the choice was taken out of our hands. What the Caxton school of writers did was to impose upon the people of New Zealand their selected representation of a social reality which showed the lifestyle and the personal and interpersonal behaviour of a small minority group. Characteristics of the mode however, are still affirmed in our society: they literally define our culture in the general tendency to negate emotion and in the cult or glorification of rugged men identified with the great outdoors. But, in fact the mode portrays the **unreality** of New Zealand life.

By examining the work of the writers included in the first three anthologies of published New Zealand short stories we can see the range, potential and the various modes, romantic and realistic, from which a national fiction could have grown. What the latter analyses have shown however, is that no matter **how** realistically

oriented it is, the short story remains a romantic genre, similar (perhaps because of its brevity) to the poem, for generally, like a poem, it involves the emotions and by a common lyric nature it imaginatively awakens new perceptions. Further, in this period too, to a surprising extent, the psycho-analytical studies reveal that the short story still serves as an historic mirror with the original romantic capacity to reflect the ideals, the fears and obsessions of the age.

Notes:

1. The dual meaning is interesting here. In one sense Adams refers to New Zealand's geographical situation 'on the extreme borders of the civilized Empire' but his characters reveal that there exists a certain pride in bordering as well on the **uncivilized** boundaries of behaviour and manners too.

CHAPTER 3

The Postwar Years: 1945-1965
and Romantic Realism

Katherine Mansfield and Frank Sargeson undoubtedly left legacies for succeeding writers of New Zealand short fiction. In addition to the so-called female and male traditions that they represented, combinations of their romantic and realistic modes were assumed by later writers. Nevertheless, it was the passing down of a legacy common to both Mansfield and Sargeson which brought about the most significant development in the writing of the later generation, revealing both a greater receptiveness to the potential in language and the projection into fictional reality of a personal vision. This new mode of realistic writing tended to call for imaginative reconstruction, the diction evoking an extra dimension in the work through symbolic intuition. The reader's imaginative 'translation', that is, constitutes an important part of the romantic element in much New Zealand fiction.

What impresses me most about the writing of this period is its **integration** of the major techniques of Mansfield and Sargeson - the uncompromising realism and

narrowed focus of Sargeson together with that rarefication of the art of short fiction which belonged more especially to Katherine Mansfield whose particular ingenuity lay in making prose realise the possibilities of poetry. A feature of the writing of this era too, was a marked concentration on 'an exposure of the ordinary', a trend important to both of the models and which, it seemed, a whole generation of writers adopted as a way of convincing the reader that what they wrote was the **reality** of life. In short, the fiction writers of this generation were expressing themselves in a way which combined essential traits of both Mansfield and Sargeson in modes which mediated between romantic and realistic. And, it is to this conjunction of minds and modes that I refer when I use the apparent paradox, 'romantic realism' (Footnote 1).

The thesis that Lawrence Jones argues through Barbed Wire and Mirrors is that re-presentations of the Mansfield and Sargeson models form a pattern of **divergence** in contemporary writing. This is a neat bifurcation of the fiction into two strands in which one band of disciples, the 'barbed wire' strain, follows what they see as the Sargesonian male realist tradition ('critical realism' Jones calls it), rendered in the laconic local idiom, and the '**other**', the 'mirror' class (predominantly women) who are exponents of a reflective "metaphorical, emotionally expressive style" and who Jones believes are descended

from the '"feminine", subjective, impressionistic tradition' of Katherine Mansfield and Robin Hyde (Jones, 236). But I do not see such a clear-cut division.

For one thing, as I have already argued, the goals and fictional effects of the models were not so radically unlike as to display such distinctive differences in the modes of their successors as Jones perceives. In fact I see these romantic and realistic modes not fixed to one pole or another in this period, but converging and fluctuating over a wide range of possibilities. And further, I believe that postwar short fiction was so tempered by the historical period in which it was written - a time of shock when the demoralising blow of the wars revealed a general 'loss of nerve' in New Zealand writing across all genres, especially in the first decade after the Second World War - that it seemed as if the writers of the 1950s had paused to take stock, to rethink the future of the race and in a sense to regenerate themselves in and through literature. This 'preservatory' impulse expressed itself in a sudden surge of stories written from a child's point of view, exploiting memories obviously drawn from autobiographical recesses. Furthermore, the stories were set within an all-encompassing provincialism where place and realism were important for the truth they inspired and yet where the romanticism of the child's uncensored emotions and vision was equally crucial in a

new psychological search for meaning.

Not all stories written in the period fitted this provincial, child's perspective pattern of course; the war stories of Dan Davin and John Reece Cole, for instance, or A. P. Gaskell's representation of the New Zealand male culture. But still I discern within the solid discipline of their military realism traces of the intrinsic romanticism of story-telling, the inevitable projection of what Donald Fanger calls 'a personal myth' (Fanger, 15). The romantic element appears as if through chinks in their armour in unpremeditated disclosures of nostalgia stemming from subjective or personal origins, often despite an author's attempt to stifle it.

What I am suggesting then is a postwar phenomenon in writing in which a strong impetus prevailed to write serious and predominantly realistic stories which are inspired nevertheless by a desire to work through personal psychological or philosophical concerns. But, most importantly, the fiction now reflected a **synthesis** of the apparent binary opposites, realism and romanticism.

The postwar story was both realistic social commentary and a romantic expression of some motivating human emotion. As Charles May argues in his essay in Short Story Theory at a Crossroads, it exemplified the mix

between the metaphoric structure of the old romance and the metonymic structure of the new realism; and although he says each works to the exclusion of the other, the 'double logic' they create becomes crucial in the development of the short story (Lohafer, 72). Still, I insist that the two are not mutually exclusive, and that although realism is essential to the contemporary reader's demand for credibility, it is merely the facade which achieves the 'suspension of disbelief' required in all fiction. My hypothesis is that both elements are present, but always the realistic component is subordinate to the romantic essence - the underlying aesthetic **dynamic** of the story. It would be logical to assume then that the creation and interpretation of this counterpointed structure must involve the 'romantic' faculties, imaginative, emotional, inductive and psychological.

In his chapter, 'Metaphoric Motivation in Short Fiction', May approaches the topic from a different angle yet he confirms my theory that the short story stems from romantic and subjective origins. May's conclusion is significant in this respect:

The theme and technique of the short story perhaps have always focused on the power of metaphor and story itself to answer that cry of heart of each of its characters, "Who am I?"

As opposed to the novel, the short story says one does not find the answer to that question in a similitude of the real world, but rather by being caught up within the role that the story demands and being therefore metaphorically transformed - so that one finds oneself by losing oneself. "The divine art is the story. In the beginning was the story" (Lohafer, 73).

This should clearly establish the connection between romance and the **art** of the short story. The question now is, does realism on its own have any relation to art? Is it not the romantic element that distinguishes the short story from any other short piece of writing or journalism which is a mere relation of events?

As part of the urge in this period to try to make sense of the human condition, writers began to resurrect the innocent thought patterns and the spirit of childhood as if persuaded by the Wordsworthian notion that children are the true witnesses. Many postwar stories are urgent examinations of parent/child relationships or psychological studies expressing emotional insecurity. It was as if in doing this these writers could check the viability of society and its ability to withstand the times. Their work is simultaneously a personal and a

universal expression of the impulse to search for identity. C. K. Stead perceives this development of humanism in Maurice Duggan's fiction. Although referring specifically to Duggan's Collected Stories, Stead seems to be speaking for practically the whole generation of writers when he observes that

(t)hree areas of experience are brought together: the sense of place, the experience of love, and the articulation of these through language. On all three the sense of self is constructed, a sense which may collapse if it is supported on falsifications (MDCS, 12).

In story after story the impulse is the same, a search for meaning and identity through retrospective examination of personal experience, a desire to review primal experience through a child's perspective.

By dividing the fiction into two distinct strands, Jones tends to underestimate the **emotion** underlying the 'critical realism'. As a critic, he is perceptive enough to acknowledge that the sentiment in Sargeson's fiction, though understated, is there, but when it comes to close analysis of this 'romantic' element, he displays a typical masculine reticence in failing to come to grips with it. Peter Simpson comments on this reserve in a recent review

of Barbed Wire and Mirrors in the Christchurch Press:

...Jones is thorough, honest, steady, rather than inspiring. He is clearly most comfortable with realistic writing, and his efforts to chart the practice of writers working outside realist conventions are liable to seem dutiful rather than fully empathetic (Simpson, 27, 8 June 91).

Since the modern short story relies on psychology, emotion and on linguistic rarefication, it seems to me that it cannot help but penetrate deeper into the subjective and impressionistic realm of romanticism. In this concluding chapter my intention is to provide evidence of the conscious and unconscious romantic levels pervading the new realism which had become entrenched in current New Zealand writing.

It would appear that Ian Reid is another who perceives the romantic connection. In The Short Story, he reinforces my own theory when he remarks that the short story is 'the Romantic prose form' and that (it) typically centres on the inward meaning of a crucial event' (Reid, 28). The notion is central to the development of my argument in relation to the New Zealand story. Throughout, I have been illustrating how the fashion in

modes in this country's short fiction has changed since the colonial years to an outwardly more realistic expression, and yet, as my research and analyses would suggest, despite the ascendant realism the short story remains a romantic genre. Historically speaking, the only difference is that contemporary writers were setting their fictional experience in solid reality and everyday trivia, whereas the medieval romance writers and the nineteenth century Romantics surrounded it with dream-like qualities or an ambience of the supernatural.

Ultimately, I think what makes the short story romantic is the desire to find the thread that makes it whole. Because of the conventional expectations of its genre the prospective reader of a story embarks on a quest to construe a significant whole out of scattered elements or events, and this, if we are reading empathetically, involves a search to discover the emotive notion which impregnates the work.

The writer to whom we automatically turn to exemplify such romanticism in the fifties is Janet Frame, not because Lawrence Jones files her work in the metaphorical 'mirror' category, but because Frame exploits romanticism, as she says in her autobiography, 'to record the essence' (EMC, 53). By examining her story, 'Spirit', for example, which is an ironic dialogue between God and the spirit of

a recently deceased person, we penetrate to the heart of much of Frame's fiction. Spirit 350 has presumably been summoned to give an account of his life in order to be assigned to his 'eternal home'. The story demonstrates by the spirit's ho-hum account of his earthly existence, 'eating and sleeping...creatures of habit...every day mostly just going backwards and forwards doing this and that' (Lag.,70), and God's subsequent allocation of a leaf for his eternal home, that for Janet Frame what makes one human is his or her imaginative qualities. Putting to use these inherent talents is what makes one essentially different from others (and from caterpillars). Further, the imagination for Frame operates through language: it is a gift bestowed upon mankind which enables us to express our sentiments and an inner life. Too late the subject of 'Spirit' realises his mistake, protesting, 'I've wept and laughed and fallen in love, I can remember and think, look at me thinking, I can think' (Lag.,71).

A metaphorical study of the titles of works is often a profitable exercise, and since Frame chose to entitle her first collection of stories The Lagoon, there is obviously an interesting correlation here. Reading her autobiography, we are encouraged to see the subjective response to the magic in certain words, especially for Janet Frame, and like the poet Yeats, she creates personal symbols. If the definition of 'lagoon' is a stretch of

salt water separated from the sea by a low sandbank, then it is possible that she perceives the separated lagoon as a metaphor for herself, signifying her feeling of alienation from mainstream society. Occasionally dubbed 'loony' (Footnote 2), Janet Frame who is herself a part of the sea (of humanity) is yet separated from it by a bar which society raises against those seen as 'different'; however it is 'a difference', as she points out in An Angel at my Table, 'which was only myself' (AAMT, 190). In stories such as 'The Lagoon' and 'Swans', lagoons are invariably surrounded in an aura of mystery, secretiveness, a drowning. For the children in 'Swans' the lagoon represents a miniature sea which stimulates imaginative play. And crossing the lagoon at dusk, '...it was as if they were walking into another world that had been kept secret from everyone and now they had found it' (Lag.,52). Furthermore, in the title story, the lagoon is, significantly, a place from which 'proper stories' emerge (See Lag.,8). Frame's imaginative cross-referencing, it seems, has conceived an essential likeness in the phenomenon of the lagoon cut off from the rest of the sea. It is for her the symbol of the sensitive, introverted artist in a conformist society. Freudian or dreamlike image transference of this kind is characteristic of Frame's fiction. The mythified lagoon provides us with an indication at the outset of the projection into reality of a personal myth and also the

poetic density with which her stories are imbued. The example highlights the reciprocal relation of romance and realism that I believe operates in almost any work of literature in contemporary New Zealand short fiction.

I have been attempting to give some idea of the power of suggestion in Frame's fiction and to show how an individual's linguistic association originates in deeply personal or emotional experience. In the same way, the following analyses should support my claim that the New Zealand short story for all its realism, retains its romantic quality, for not only Frame but short fiction writers in general tend to use language in a subjective manner. They write, that is, about what moves them and they select words and symbols that will best express those feelings.

Frame's story, 'Keel and Kool' also from The Lagoon collection, embraces both realistic and romantic traditions in a way that exemplifies my definition of romantic realism. This work exhibits the essential qualities of Mansfield's and Sargeson's short fiction. It has the appearance of a simply-told child's story, ostensibly about having a picnic, and beginning prosaically, 'Father shook the bidi-bids off the big red and grey rug and then he spread it out again in the grass' (Lag.,19). However, as in a Sargesonian narrative, the prosaic details and naive viewpoint provide the framework

from which we can extract a psychological meaning. And in the same way that Sargeson constructs the matter-of-fact picture, although the details in themselves are unremarkable, altogether they form what Donald Fanger calls 'a network of subterranean relations' (Fanger, 26) which allows us to apprehend the narrative on more than one level. In Frame's story these subterranean relations begin to formulate a child's emotional response to the death of her sister. Here Frame opposes the view commonly held by adults that children do not understand death or feel the loss the same. Mrs. Todd can only contemplate in euphemistic terms that Eva has 'passed beyond', sighing, '(t)he children were such happy little things. They didn't realise....' (Lag.,21). In fact, Winnie perceives the finality of death and as a result does suffer.

Despite the familiarity and apparent realism of Frame's representation of life, her reality is a manipulated one. The laying of the picnic rug, for all its *bididid*, is a preparation for taking a family photograph which, as Mrs. Todd notes, is '...the first we've taken since Eva - went' (p.19 Lag). The reader is now alerted to a 'presence' in the story created by an absence. Frame's specific selection of detail and the negative/positive images of the photographic process which evoke Eva's absence in reality/presence in memory are our first clues to an undercurrent of emotion in the episodic stream. Similarly, Winnie's tiff with Joan

Mason is not just a representative childish squabble but has implications beyond the seemingly objective reality of the 'picnic' narrative. In retrospect it can be seen to stem from Winnie's pining for her creative sister.

Psychologically, the quarrel with Joan is a grief-centred retaliation against anyone who shared secrets with Eva. Further, as the invariably significant titling of a story would indicate, 'Keel and Kool', the seagull's cry, is central to the pre-conceived artistic effect of the work as a whole. Once we know that it functions as the story's organizing metaphor, we are in a position to extract the essence from its implications. Thus we see Winnie's personal vision of the world so coloured by the loss of her sister that she interprets the call of the seagull as 'Keel and Kool', arising possibly by onomatopoeic suggestion from the sound of 'keening'. The cry is the psychological projection of Winnie's own feelings onto the seagull. Alone at the end in the **pine** tree, the child bewailing the loss of **her** mate identifies with the seagull because of an imagined common sorrow. Again, it is worth noting how Frame creates the dual realistic/romantic effect in her description of Winnie crushing the 'pine needles' in her hand and smelling them, which is at once a realistic and typical childlike act as well as a loaded metaphor to suggest the sharpness of the pain in the pining process. Once the pattern is deciphered, the inward meaning of the event, that is, the child's unrecognized grief for her dead sister, is revealed in the

final sentence: 'Only up in the sky there was a seagull as white as chalk, circling and crying Keel Keel Come home Kool, come home Kool. And Kool would never come, ever' (p.27 Lag).

Fanger's assumption is that romantic realism preserves both a type and its mythical aura (Fanger, 21), and this seems exactly right in Frame's story. On the one hand, Frame's realism is sound in her refusal to idealise her subjects and setting. In Winnie's jealousy, lying and quarrelling, for example, the author presents a typical child, but on the other hand, there is an allegorical order where an emotional dimension is symbolically drawn, and the child, metamorphosed as the bird, becomes a symbol of mourning. In this interaction of the external and internal spheres lies the concept of romantic realism.

Three representative stories written from a child's perspective and whose romantic and realistic tendencies bring them within the tradition of romantic realism are Dan Davin's 'The Vigil', Maurice Duggan's 'A Small Story' and Janet Frame's 'Child'. Although Lawrence Jones places Davin and Duggan firmly on the realist side of his dividing line, all three stories, it seems to me, explore the origins of emotion. In various ways they deal with both the physical and the affective life of the child, bringing together, in C. K. Stead's words, 'the sense of place, the experience of love and the articulation of these through language' (MDCS,

12).

'The Vigil' by Davin, one of his series of stories about the Southland Connolly family, is organized on two levels, the real - commonplace details describing the milieu and what is actually happening - and the imaginary, the romantic version that young Mick Connolly weaves around the actual situation.

The basic reality being portrayed is of a child minding the hens to see that they do not stray into his father's vegetable garden. Boring as the chore is, Davin's narrative follows the child's observations and point of view with impelling accuracy. Davin begins by describing the landscape for its own sake, not as a stimulus to emotion or character, opening with the more distant view of the cows after the milking 'lying down and chewing their cud or lazily cropping the short grass' and 'the gorse hedges which ran down two sides of the paddock (and which) were a mass of gold...' (GBP, 16). The view links Mick by his line of vision with his environment. Then Mick's focus narrows and, a sense of place emerges as vividly through the insignificant minutiae characteristic of a child's notice:

The hens had been let out through the little square hole that led through the back fence from the fowl run. They were busy poking and

scratching about in the dried mud which had been all soft and squelchy and impossible to walk on in the winter. You could still see the deep holes where the cows had walked, dragging their hoofs out of the ooze. But the holes were hard and dry now. Some of the hens were picking away at the very fresh light-green grass that grew round the ruins of the hay-stack. In the winter the cows used to wear the barbed-wire fence down trying to get at the hay. Now they didn't care and only the hens were interested in scrabbling about among the sticks and logs which had kept the stack off the ground (GBP, 16).

As it gets colder and darker and nobody calls Mick in for his tea, a change occurs in the child which subsequently affects the tone and atmosphere of the narrative. The darkening scene acts as a catalyst bringing with it a change from external to internal concerns, and, in expression, a change from the convention of realism to the convention to romanticism. Davin's title, 'The Vigil', an elevated term for the hen-minding that it signifies, anticipates the transition from the real to the romantic.

The narratorial transition begins with the observation, '(i)t was getting dusk as well now' (p.18 GBP) as if triggered by a childlike response to the dark; it moves

realistically through the routines consistent with the time of night, then builds up to a melodramatic climax in which Mick's imagined tragedy is designed to produce heightened feelings of pathos:

He could hear Mrs. Scott away in the distance calling to her kids to come in off the hill. They were lucky not to keep hens and a garden in their family...He hunched himself up against the wall. His knees were so cold they felt all prickly with goose-flesh.

There was nothing more to think about. He had thought about hens and haystacks and larks and cows and gardens, and even if there'd been anything left to think about he was too hungry. The trouble was they'd forgotten all about him. They didn't care whether he went hungry or not. He often used to think he was an adopted child; now he was sure of it.

And his step-parents were trying to be cruel to him. Well, if nobody cared whether he starved or froze he would just starve and freeze. He'd stay sitting here forever and when they found him he would be all stiff and cold and then everyone would be sorry and his mother and father would be very ashamed while people criticised them for their savage cruelty and neglect of their sensitive child

(GBP, 18-19).

Midway through his fantasy, the real world intrudes and Mick's attention, of necessity, is drawn again to the fowls. The switch back to visionary mode is marked by the contrasting solemnity of tone and language emulating heroic drama:

One of the innocent hens had been getting worried about the time and she now came towards the gate thinking it was the way back into the fowl-run. He threw a clod at her and caught her a terrific thump.

"What a noble-looking boy," people were saying as they looked down at his young corpse stretched out on the bier. There was a calm, sad expression on his pale, drawn face; as of duty done. "Some people don't deserve to have children," one person said. "What an intelligent, sensitive face," said another. "Like the sentinel at Pompeii," said Father O'Duffy, who used to tell them about Italy. Beside the bier lay his faithful dog, Jack, with his head between his paws. Later on, when they buried him out in the cemetery between the railway and East Road, Jack would lie by his grave, the way Mr. Manion's dog Glen did, and stay there fretting till he died' (p.19 GBP).

Davin's ironic juxtaposition of the real and the ideal, showing Mick quite innocently asserting his aggression in the midst of the pathetic scene he is imaginatively contriving, produces a comic reaction rather than bringing about the sympathetic response to a sorely aggrieved child that he intends.

However, in spite of the humour, Mick's melodramatic treatment of the situation, the conversion of his mother and father into villains and himself into the victim of parental neglect, all stem from emotional insecurity, from the child's instinctive or morbid anxiety about not being cared for. The idealization of himself is an ego-centred response to Mick's damaged self-esteem. In a welter of conflicting emotions, Mick perversely creates desolation where he desires consolation, the fantasy possibly acting as a form of empowerment in the fulfilment of a wish to punish his mother for neglecting him. Illogical though it seems, this is the initial response of the young ego to the experience of love. It is not surprising then how quickly Mick (and the narratorial mode) regain the status quo when his mother comes out and calls him in to his tea and sits him **in his father's place** by the fire, prepares his toast and boils the brown hen's egg for him.

Mick's childish martyrdom touches familiar chords. In a

flash of recognition, his 'heroic' act of obedience carried beyond the bounds of reason 'to make his parents take notice' suddenly becomes a shared experience, producing in the reader something like a *deja vu* response. As Charles May says, in the story 'we are metaphorically transformed...we have found ourselves by losing ourselves'. In this way we can appreciate the romantic quality of Davin's prose and perceive that his apparently realistic language is subtly invested with emotion. Allen Curnow's poem, 'At Dead Low Water' expresses in the lines, 'Twenty years, a child returned/Discerns in quicksand his own footprint...', how a particular and personal incident becomes universal, compelling us to identify with the common impulses of childhood. Such literary experiences offer emotional satisfaction revealing it seems some psychological urge to tap into the Collective Unconscious, to feel an affinity with the rest of humanity.

In 'The Vigil' Davin conveys reality in a way that calls up a universal response through the skilful articulation of language from a child's point of view. Because the story centres around Mick's ego, the part of the mind that has a sense of individuality, its appeal is emotional. Besides, it illuminates the dualism in the human personality. Mick's ambivalent responses endear him to us (for similar confused primal memories are stirred), the logical and illogical, real and romantic, the passive

and aggressive, independence and dependency, real anger but only a feigned rebellion. Bringing together by design the reality and the emotions of both the protagonist and the reader in this way is an art in fiction which arguably justifies the label 'romantic realism'.

Maurice Duggan's fiction also demonstrates a theory or system constructed from realistic and romantic components. 'A Small Story' opens with a fairhaired boy and a fairhaired girl swinging on the gate awaiting the return of their father. When the postman brings a letter for Mrs. Lenihan, which was the name of their dead mother, the girl's suspicions are confirmed; her father has remarried. Harry is just a little too young to absorb the implications but they do not escape his sister, Margaret, from whose point of view the story is told. Without attempting more than a superficial reading, the narrative will stand up on its own as simple realism. Read in this way it is a coherent report of the outward particulars of a crucial event in the lives of two small children. It tells of Father arriving home in a taxi with the new Mrs. Lenihan; they try to decide what the children will call their step-mother; Mrs. Lenihan kisses them, and Margaret and Harry are told to run along and play. Margaret tries to make sure Harry will not forget their real mother; she becomes angry and tearful at his naive complaisance and they swing on the gate again in silence.

In its abolition of happy ending and plot, in its presentation of objects with such particular accuracy, the story is realistic. Duggan's prose, however, has the rarefying qualities and imaginative use of rhetoric of a Mansfield work, the kind of romantic treatment which brings us to a closer knowledge of human nature. In categorizing Duggan as 'realist writer', Jones gives the impression that in Duggan's work a 'pure' rendering of realism has been attempted. Yet it seems to me that Duggan's representation of certain objects is charged with hidden implications which permit us to interpret the underlying sentiment and passion. Fanger makes a relevant point when he quotes Wordsworth who wrote in 1816 of particularity, that '(o)bjects derive their influence not from properties inherent in them, not from what they are actually in themselves, but from such as are bestowed upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects' (Fanger, 13).

In Duggan's story, for example, one of the objects given such romantic treatment, or the object that evokes this 'bestowing power of the imagination' (Fanger, 13), is the gate. (It is, I think, relevant to mention here that Duggan dedicated 'A Small Story' to F.S. - Frank Sargeson in 1951, for in this story Duggan was acknowledging a debt to Sargeson in achieving the realistic simplicity of his mentor. It seems that Duggan had recognized too that his

own and Sargeson's 'realism' was the same controlled public or outward expression, 'the stiff upper lip' veneer which masks deeply felt emotions.) (Footnote 3)

Thus, Duggan's story begins: 'The fairhaired boy and the fairhaired girl swung on the gate. They stood with their feet thrust between the wooden rungs and pushed the gate back and rode on it as it swung forward. They had been forbidden to ride on the gate but that was another time; each day had its own rules' (MDCS, 78). As a description of children swinging on a gate it is a typical action, a vividly realistic portrayal, and in its expression it realizes the cognitive level of the child's perspective. It is described with an apparently casual objectivity, but in fact, Duggan is presenting reality as he wants us to see it, in a way that will co-ordinate the parts of his artistic pattern to produce an affective response. The metaphoric influence of the gate on the reader is the key to the elements in the story responsible for those reactions.

Placed at beginning and end of the story as it is, the Lenihan gate becomes arresting in its significance. A gate may signify either a way of escape or a means of blocking access. Selected detail informs us that there is no name on the gate (unlike the one **opposite**, exotically entitled 'Sans Souci', carefree and without troubles), and, as the discerning reader will also note, a subtle

emphasis is put on the gate as it slams shut at the end of each ride. On one swing forward when Harry gives an extra hard push off with his foot, we are told that the resultant jarring causes Margaret pain in the stomach. For the children then, the gate with no name, metaphorically speaking, leads nowhere. It is as if they were not there or, in terms of the allegory, that their emotional existence has been ignored. The repetitive action of this jarring closure at the end of each forward swing of the gate implies that its riders are positioned behind bars, confronted with a situation from which there is no escape. It accentuates the children's impotence in an adult-dominated world. The gate functions as a barrier blocking the children's involvement in decisions that intimately relate to their welfare. Margaret and Harry are thus shown to be powerless to do anything about having foisted upon them the coarse and predatory woman who is now legally their new mother. The gate symbolizes the impasse.

Roland Barthes has pointed out the character of language as a multiple system of codes and that the text is infinitely transcribable in another code because each literary work has a multitude of meanings and no interpretation has priority over another (Barthes, 76). That knowledge is applicable here for we have learned to expect that literary meaning is secret and that we must

search for it. Because of this plurality of code systems in language then, the unwritten romantic aspect of Duggan's fiction which the symbolism of the gate stimulates our imaginations to invent (like Janet Frame's seagull metaphor in 'Keel and Kool'), helps to communicate the trauma, the frustration and despair of the sensitive child. Duggan writes the facts of the matter but in such a way that we are subtly supplied with the means to interpret the other half of the story. His realism is overt, for there is no stigma attached to external reality. However, designed in the contemporary literary tradition, it could be seen to be expressed with what seems like a deliberate emotional restraint so that we can only read **into** it the romantic effects, the love, anguish and desires felt by the characters - emotions which our society for some reason sees the need to repress.

Thus, it may be that the dominant level of the realism influenced Jones in his decision to categorize Duggan as a realist writer. But, despite Jones's classification, Maurice Duggan's fiction is in many ways impressionistic, romantic in spirit, resembling poetry or a Monet painting in the sense that its basic outline can be seen at a glance while its full emotional or psychological import comes as a subsequent response evoked in the mind of the individual reader, the product of his or her creative imagination. And, it is from our own

romantic completion of a story that we derive our greatest pleasure or aesthetic satisfaction from literature.

Janet Frame's short fiction, 'Child', also explores the parent/child relationship and it is again by metaphoric translation that her story too demonstrates the experience of love. In effect, Frame and Duggan were writing prose with exactly the same controlled simplicity; both writers present their visions through concrete detail, controlled so that it works by suggestion, leaving the emotional evocation to us. Although Jones grasps the major implications of Duggan's short stories, he refuses to admit that Duggan's techniques and the reader's responses are romantic. In other words, he fails to see that this allegorical method creates a new fusion of modes previously considered antithetical and that both Duggan and Frame are exemplars of romantic realism.

For me, the stories of both Frame and Duggan are almost-identical in technique, style and conception. Thus, like 'A Small Story', Frame's 'Child', on a superficial level, reads simply as plotless child's play. Jan, the protagonist, and Minnie Passmore get the strap at school for not breathing properly in a singing lesson; as a consequence they become best friends and after school they go to Minnie's house to fly her new kite. By employing methods similar to Duggan's, Frame too

manipulates our emotional response. The deepest levels of Frame's meaning emerge only when we have identified and interpreted the metaphoric function of her metonymic detail.

In both writers' work the clues are to be found when the narrator digresses from the action and attention is focussed on selected minutiae. Before Jan goes to Minnie's house she must call at her own home to ask her mother's permission, in case they think she has been kidnapped. At home Jan is humiliated by her big mother in a big blue pinny who berates her (in Minnie's presence) for picking a hole in the bread at dinner-time. But the final indignity for Jan is having her mother shake her pinny at her in dismissal the way she shakes the wheat out to the fowls. In precisely the same manner as Duggan focusses on the gate as the instrument of entrapment to maximize his effect, so Janet Frame focusses on the details of Jan's embarrassment and her antagonism towards her mother. In sentences such as, 'Oh how lovely to have no mother and father and live with your grandma and grandad, to have a macrocarpa hedge instead of African Thorn...' (Lag., 62), Frame is endeavouring to express one side of the emotional ambivalence of the child's relationship with a parent. Here, she conveys the hostility towards a mother whose elimination seems at the time to be to the child's advantage. In this love/hate

conflict, the hostility is easy enough to detect because it is expressed on a realistic level, but the nature of the child's love is secret, symbolic and intrinsically metaphorical. Frame's technique for suggesting this emotional bond is, like Duggan's, the symbolization of an object in the story which becomes crucial to the meaning. Frame's symbol is the kite, and the primal human attachment (the umbilical cord and filial love) is represented by the image of the child clinging tightly to the string, 'as if the kite were a real live thing like Grandad or Grandma Passmore or my own mother and father' (Lag.,67). And because we are recreating the text from a symbolic framework, as we do poetry, it has the effect of communicating on a deeper level.

We are led to expect that the highlight of the afternoon for Jan will be when she is finally allowed her turn at flying Minnie Passmore's new kite. In anticipation, she watches Minnie with the kite which to her innocent imagination seemed to be 'struggling to free itself so it could go yet higher up and up and disappear' (Lag.,67). And yet, at the climactic moment, standing there on the hill with the kite in her grasp and the wind rushing over the hill, unaccountably, Jan's mind strays to the ducks flying home 'heads craned forward eagerly', and the other birds 'cradled' in the heaving tops of the pine trees. Instead of focussing on the physical exhilaration

of Jan racing into the wind with the kite soaring high, Frame defuses the situation by transferring our attention from the physical to the mental activity of the child, and through this shift to reflective tone we are able to perceive what is more meaningful to the child and then go on to construct the story's emotional resolution. The kite string which represents a precious connection or the crucial attachment between parent and child, is the pivotal concept that stimulates the transition from external to internal focus. Frame's reiterated description of the big, aproned mother figure which had stood for all that was repugnant in a parent, is suddenly transformed from its original derogatory sense into an image of nurturing and love. Its reappearance in the concluding sentence like a refrain, and in a childish softened form, enables us to sense the protagonist's deepest longings:

And down from the other hill was the place where I lived, with the African Thorn hedge, and the dalias in the garden, and my big mother with a big blue pinny to shake at me as if it were wheat for a little chook (Lag., 68, my emphasis).

In style, both Duggan and Frame (and Davin too for that matter) have employed simple realistic language appropriate to a child which belies their extraordinary

technical ability to manipulate language. Each author's vision involves an exploration of the primitive emotions that are the formative signs of the child's becoming a separate identity and yet each story expresses the contrary emotional pulls, the wrench of separation and the Freudian desire to 'return to the womb'.

In this chapter I have concentrated on stories written from a child's perspective to show a certain postwar phenomenon. However, point of view is not an issue when proving the 'persistence' of romantic realism in these postwar stories. Whether the work be constructed from an adult's or child's, or male's or female's point of view, its encoded message can be interpreted in specific ways such as the metaphoric translation above.

Finally it must be said that because of the limitations of the form of the short story, it must rely, like the poem, on figuration and other forms of implied meaning to convey fully the romantic predicament. Frame and Duggan master the genre in similar style, in ways that create a modal union, a balance between romance and realism. Their work gives us at once the assurance that this is real life and the fulfilment derived from a sublimating subjective and emotional involvement in its interpretation. The achievement of this 'coalition' is what establishes the position of these authors of New

Zealand short fiction as romantic realists.

Notes:

1. The first time I used the hybrid term, 'romantic realism' was in relation to the work of Frank Sargeson, in the belief that it was an original coupling of concepts. My attention was subsequently drawn to Donald Fanger's interesting study of this apparent paradox in Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism. Fanger's theory is that the work of four great writers - Balzac, Dickens, Gogol and Dostoevsky - can be better understood in terms of this concept than of any other. His approach is marginally different from mine in that Fanger relates the concept to the common theme of these authors which was the great modern city, Paris, London, Petersburg. These writers, he explains in the preface, 'built their myths by returning to it obsessively...from a variety of angles, their obsessive concern being with the character of new urban life, with what happened to the traditional staples of human nature when placed in an unnatural setting and subjected to pressures, many of them new in kind and all of them new in degree' (Fanger, viii). What Fanger and I do share in our apprehension of the term, however, is a common interest in the special synthesis of romance and realism in fiction. This Fanger expounds in his first chapter, inventively entitled 'Realism, Pure and Romantic'.
2. Frame herself uses the term "loonies" several times in her autobiography; for example in An Angel at my Table (115). Note also the assonance factor to appreciate Frame's association of ideas in the terms 'lagoon' and 'loony'.
3. It was not all 'stiff upper lip', however; Kai Jensen is entertaining on Frank Sargeson's coding of homosexual behaviour in his stories.

EPILOGUE

I began this project by expressing my own predominantly instinctive and emotional response to stories. The thesis takes a more rational approach to the topic. Firstly, it traces 'the story' back to mythical and romantic origins, supplying reasons to account for the impulse of people of diverse societies to fulfil desires imaginatively through fiction. Secondly, it provides evidence to show the continuity and persistence of romance in the short story genre.

Throughout my survey of a century of New Zealand story writing, looking in particular at the relationship between romance and realism, I challenge the generally accepted claim that our short fiction is primarily realistic. The development of realism in New Zealand short fiction (in the form typified by writers of the nineteenth-century literary movement) is observed over a one hundred year time span. But, although historically realism becomes a powerful mode of expression in the short fiction, as I demonstrate in my analysis of the texts, its potency is either equalled or eclipsed by the concurrent presence of the more dynamic and emotional romantic forces. In the modern short story, I have tried to show

that its power, which is pre-eminently a **romantic** power, is deployed by the reader's imagination, and because it is evoked in a private and subjective way through identification with the characters, it has the capacity to work to the reader's advantage, fulfilling needs and satisfying repressed desires which could otherwise be left unresolved. By systematically tracing a historical pattern of the rise of realism into the 1960s and by taking into consideration the results of my analysis of the texts, I have come to the conclusion that my instinctive romantic response to reading short fiction was also reasonably realistic.

But where does the story go from that point? Historically, the 1960s was a time of radical change, of political activism, of the women's liberation movement and Maori consciousness: it was the time of the loosening of sexual and cultural constraints. From the 1960s onwards there is a corresponding change in New Zealand short fiction. The change is interesting in the work of Maurice Duggan for example, who displays a switch in mid-career and whose later writing moves more and more away from realism. This is apparent in his longer story, 'Along Rideout Road that Summer', in which Duggan unashamedly exploits the romantic literary associations of Coleridge's poem, 'Kubla Khan', a technique which subtly converts the work from 'story' into burlesque. In a short piece

entitled 'Six place names and a girl' which Duggan described as 'perhaps less a story than a prose celebration' (MDCS, 8), he rejected here too the duty of the writer to 'push the material falsely into the shape of a 'story'' (MDCS, 8). Keri Hulme is another whose short fiction, especially in the Te Kaihau collection, demonstrates the radical break away from the realistic 'story' convention. Some of her pieces take the form of poetry, for example 'Tara Diptych': others are like fantastic dreams, 'Kaibutsu San' for instance. Hulme and Duggan are typical of the writers who were, in this period, beginning to use their fiction as a means of expressing personal preoccupations, and also escaping the constraints of the community-defined modes of 'realistic' fiction.

Thus, as New Zealand short fiction was being liberated along with other established institutions, the strict discipline of realism was being modified, ignored or lost altogether, whereas it seemed that the romantic character of the fiction had suddenly been liberated from its bondage. The fictional purdah was lifted so that it could now appear as self-expressive, as dominant or as provocative as it pleased.

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